HOURS WITH THE BIBLE;

OR,

THE SCRIPTURES IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN KNOWLEDGE.

BY

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AN ENTIRELY NEW EDITION, REVISED THROUGHOUT
AND LARGELY REWRITTEN.

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Land of Goshen	1–34
II.	Egypt before the Hebrew Sojourn	35–76
III.	The Oppression in Egypt	77–113
IV.	Moses	114–141
V.	The Plagues of Egypt	142–177
VI.	The Tenth Plague and the Exodus	178–214
VII.	The March to Sinai	215–256
VIII.	Still on the way to Sinai	257–295
IX.	At Sinai	296–320
X.	Still at Sinai	321–348
XI.	The Wilderness	349–385
XII.	The Eve of the Conquest	386–428
XIII.	The Conquest of Canaan	429–504
XIV.	The Time of the Judges	505–525
XV.	The Judges	526–555
XVI.	Gideon to Samson	556–580
	Index	581

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HOURS WITH THE BIBLE.

CHAPTER I.

THE LAND OF GOSHEN.

THE district of Egypt[1] which was to be the cradle of the Hebrew nation, lay on its north-east frontier, and was thus at once nearest Canaan, from which their fathers had come, and most isolated from the Egyptian population, to whom the presence of foreign nomadic shepherds[2] was at all times distasteful. Shepherd races allied to the Hebrews had, moreover, already largely settled in it, and were thus, virtually, a protection to the side of the Nile valley lying open towards Asia, which had no other safeguard than the fortified wall between Suez and the Mediterranean. The precise position of Goshen is not mentioned in the Bible, but it is certain, on various grounds, that it lay as above stated. Thus, Joseph's brethren were required to halt, on entering it, till Pharaoh had been seen and had expressed his pleasure concerning them; and there is no mention of the Nile having been passed to reach it, or of the Hebrews having re-crossed that river at the Exodus.[3] They were,

[1] Lengerke derives Egypt from Sanscrit. Aguptas = "The protected." *Kenaan*, p. 351.

[2] The Coptic word for shepherd means also a "disgrace." *Dictionary of the Bible*, art. "Goshen." The Copts are the descendants of the ancient Egyptians.

[3] Other proofs are given in *Durch Gosen*, pp. 505 ff.

moreover, near the Red Sea, for a few marches brought them to it. Further, the Egyptian "nome" or district Qesem—a name almost identical with Gesen or Gesem, used for Goshen in the Greek version—in the region otherwise suggested as that assigned to Jacob and his tribe, lay on the north-east of the country.

According to Ebers,[1] the limits of this tract stretched southwards in a narrow tongue, almost to the present Cairo, on the west side of the Tanitic branch of the Nile, which formed, in fact, its western boundary to the sea. On the south, on the other hand, it bent north-eastwardly from Cairo to the line of the present Suez Canal, which, however, it presently crossed, reaching the Mediterranean at Pelusium, where the ancient fortified wall from Suez abutted on the shore. But any exact knowledge of the boundaries is perhaps, as yet, impossible, if we may judge from the controversy respecting them.[2]

The latest conclusions on this point identify the present village of Saft-el Henneh, on the south side of the railway from Cairo to Ismailia, about half way between Zagazig, once Bubastis, and Tel el Kebir, with Phacusa, the ancient capital of Goshen. The Greek Bible calls the Hebrew district "Gesen of Arabia," that is, of the political division of the Delta known as the "nome of Arabia." The Egyptian name of Phacusa would be "Pa Kes," the "temple of Kes," a name twice found on the shrine of the sanctuary of Saft-el Henneh by M. E. Naville. In "Phacusa" the second half, "*cusa*," is believed to be identical with the first syllable of Goshen, which the Greeks spelt "Gesen," which is similar to "Kes" in the Egyptian "Pa Kes," the native

[1] Map in *Durch Gosen*, p. 72.

[2] Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, pp. 503 ff. Brugsch, *History of Egypt*, vol. ii. p. 339.

name of Phacusa. The district first assigned to the Hebrews is believed by M. Naville, on the strong ground of the result of careful exploration of the local remains, to have been the country round Saft, within the triangle formed by the villages of Saft, Belbeis, and Tel el Kebir. The belief of Ebers and Brugsch that the village of Fakoos was Phacusa, is rejected by M. Naville from the want of correspondence between its site and the requirements of the position of the real Phacusa, as indicated by ancient notices. The name, indeed, is similar, but there are other cases in which the same name is used of two places by ourselves. The part given to Joseph's brethren was, apparently, only a centre from which they spread, and became equivalent to the wider tract known in the Greek Bible as the "land of Rameses." When the Hebrews settled in Egypt under the last Hyksos kings, Goshen seems, from incidental peculiarities of ancient lists and descriptions of the divisions of the country, to have been, as yet, uncultivated, and neither divided among Egyptians, nor regularly settled and governed : a tract of waste land, we may suppose, sufficiently watered to produce good pasturage, and capable, through industry, to be in the end exceptionally fertile. From its position and state it could thus be assigned to foreigners without despoiling the native population. Phacusa, M. Naville thinks identical with the city of Rameses, but hesitates to regard this as established.[1]

Goshen is praised by Pharaoh, in the audience granted to Joseph,[2] as ranking with the best of the land, which implies its extreme fertility ; but it must also have been well suited for pasture. Long neglect has now reduced it to a barren

[1] *Goshen and Saft-el Henneh*, by Ed. Naville, etc., pp. 14-20. Egyptian Exploration Society.

[2] Gen. xlvii. 6, 11.

desert of sand and loose stone, powdered with a salt efflorescence from the soil ; but the proof of its ancient richness is seen along the banks of the fresh-water canal, led by Lesseps from the Nile to the great Suez Canal. I have repeatedly travelled by the railway which runs alongside of it, and found that, alike at the stations where we stopped and throughout the whole journey, wherever water reaches, by irrigation from this, Goshen blossoms into wild beauty,[1] showing that moisture alone is needed to make the whole landscape a succession of luxuriant meadows and golden cornfields. Nothing could better illustrate the force of Napoleon's remark that, under a good government, the Nile invades the Desert, but under a bad one the Desert invades the Nile. Thus the "field of Zoan," that is, the country round about the city of Rameses-Tanis, in this region—a district anciently so fertile and "well-watered" as to recall to the Hebrews the glories of the garden of Eden[2]—is now a desolate sandy plain, covered with gigantic ruins of columns, pillars, sphinxes, and stones of buildings. By a singular good fortune, a letter of an Egyptian scribe has been preserved, which describes it as it was in the time of the Hebrew oppression. "I arrived," says the writer, "at the city of Rameses-Tanis, and found it a very charming place, with which nothing in or around Thebes can compare. The seat of the court is here. It is pleasant to live in. Its fields are full of good things, and life passes in constant plenty and abundance. It has a daily market. Its canals are rich in fish : its lakes swarm with birds : its meadows are green with vegetables : there is no end of the lentils, and melons which taste like honey grow in its irrigated fields. Its barns are full of wheat and dhourra, and reach as

[1] *Durch Gosen*, p. 21. [2] Gen. xiii. 10.

high as heaven.'[1] Onions and leeks grow in bunches in the enclosures. The vine, the almond-tree, and the fig-tree grow in the gardens. There is plenty of sweet wine, the produce of Egypt, which they mix with honey. The red fish is in the Lotus canal; the Borian fish in the ponds; many kinds of Bori fish, besides carp and pike, in the canal of Pu-harotha:[2] fat-fish and Kephli-pennu fish in the pools of the inundation: the Hanaz fish in the full mouth of the Nile, near Tanis. The pool of Horus furnishes salt, the Panhura lake nitre. Their ships enter the harbour; plenty and abundance are perpetual. He rejoices who has settled here. The reedy lake is full of lilies: that of Pshensor is gay with papyrus flowers. Fruits from the nurseries: flowers from the gardens: festoons from the vineyards; birds from the ponds, are dedicated to the feasts of King Rameses. Those who live near the sea come with fish. Feasts in honour of the heavenly bodies and of the great events of the seasons interest the whole population. The youth are perpetually clad in festive attire, with fine oil on their heads of freshly curled hair. On the day when Rameses II.—the war god Muth, on earth—came to the city, they stood at their doors with branches of flowers in their hands, and garlands (on their heads). All the people were assembled, neighbour with neighbour, to bring forward their complaints. Girls trained in the singing schools of Memphis filled the air with songs. The wine was delicious: the cider was like sugar: the sherbet, like almonds mixed with honey. There was beer from Galilee (Kati) in the

[1] This expression shows that the language of the Jewish spies describing the Amorite town of Palestine as walled up to heaven, was a common Oriental hyperbole for anything very high. See Deut. i. 28.

[2] One of these fish is said to come from the river Picharta—the Euphrates—of course salted.

port (brought in ships from Palestine): wine from the vineyards: with sweet refreshments from Lake Sagabi: and garlands from the orchards. They sat there with joyful heart, or walked about without ceasing. King Rameses Miamun was the god they celebrated thus."[1]

Such was one part of Goshen at the time of the Exodus: but thirty-six centuries have seen a wonderful transformation of the scene, once so full of warm life and natural beauty. On the banks of the sweet-water canal, which now runs eastwards through the Wady Tumilat to the Suez Canal—at a spot where the vestiges of an ancient canal still remain—near Maschuta, there stands an immense block of granite, representing on its front face, in relief, a Pharaoh sitting between the gods Ra and Tum. It is no other than Rameses II., for his name occurs six times in the inscription on the back of the block. The remains of innumerable bricks made of the mud of the Nile, mixed with straw, and stamped with his cipher, lie around—the wreck of the old wall of the city of Pithom. It was reserved to our day to open the shapeless mounds which rise within, and lay bare the long buried secrets of the ancient city.

Egypt, as Herodotus truly said, is "the gift of the Nile." The fertilizing mud deposited by the yearly overflow of the great river, and its quickening waters, led everywhere over the soil, have from the remotest ages created a long ribbon of the richest green along the banks; in many places, especially in Upper Egypt, not more than two miles across, and seldom more than ten, including the river, which is from 2,000 to 4,000 feet broad. A few miles north of Cairo, however, the magnificent stream, after a course of over 4,000

[1] *Anastasi Papyrus*, III. plate i. 11. Translated by C. W. Goodwin, M.A., in *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. pp. 11-16; and by Brugsch, *History of Egypt*, vol. ii pp 96 ff.

miles, divides into two channels, now called the Rosetta and Damietta branches, which determine the extent of cultivable land; fertility stretching from their banks as far as the waters of the yearly inundation spread or can be diffused. It was the belief in ancient Egypt that when Memphis was founded, as they believed, thirty centuries before the time of Rameses II., all the country except near Thebes in Upper Egypt was more or less a marsh, and that below Lake Moeris, which is much higher up the river than Cairo, the whole country was under water. As late as a hundred and fifty years after Christ, the geographer Ptolemy does not show any land further north than about the latitude of Zoan, which is not easy to understand, since Zoan Tanis was a capital of Lower Egypt as far back as the times of the Hyksos, that is, in Joseph's day. The natives, in fact, believed that what is now called the Delta was originally a bay of the Mediterranean, which is no doubt the fact, as it grows even now, at the rate of about a mile in sixty years. Old mouths of the river have consequently been filled up for ages, as in the case of one which ran near Ismaila, but had already been filled up in Necho's time, six hundred years before Christ, causing him to replace it by a canal. In the days of the Hebrew settlement in Egypt, the Pelusiac branch of the river, which formed the western boundary of Goshen, parted from the main stream at a point above that at which the Damietta branch leaves it, but it has for ages been choked up.

Four thousand years ago, the rich landscape thus created by the mud of the Nile overflow, though of much less extent than at present, must have been in many respects like the Delta[1] of to-day, which shows well-nigh interminable

[1] Delta is the Greek letter of that name, Δ; used for the land formed at the mouth of a river from the shape of the two being similar.

fields of maize, cotton, sugar-cane, and other produce, cultivated by the fellahîn, and irrigated by little water-wheels, through channels often small enough to be opened or closed by the foot; unspeakably wretched roads of dykes, from amidst clumps of palms, and marked by great dove-towers, often ruinous enough. In ancient times the whole region must have been filled with busy life and a strange civilization. The first Egyptian monarchy had its seat at Memphis ages before Jacob's day, and the kings of the Old Empire who flourished there, had left monuments of their greatness, which were old in the times of the patriarch, and still astonish the world. Huge dykes, like those of Holland, were made by them, to keep the Nile from flooding the cities, which, themselves, were built on artificial mounds raised high above the level of the annual inundations. The turquoise mines of the Sinai peninsula had been discovered and were vigorously worked. The forced labour of tens of thousands had built the gigantic masses of the pyramids, of limestone from the quarries of the neighbouring Arabian hills, cased with huge blocks of granite from Assouan, at the first cataracts, far up the river; wonderfully polished, and cut with an exactness which modern skill still envies.[1] The great Sphinx, cut out of the living rock, a temple excavated between its paws, and its awful head rising a hundred feet into the air, stood then in all its majesty, for Thothmes IV. had in those days cleared away the sand by which it had in the course of centuries been in a measure overwhelmed. A vast series of tombs, hewn out of the rock, beneath

[1] The causeway to bring the stone to the Great Pyramid, from the Nile, employed 100,000 men, relieved every three months, for ten years, or, in all, 4,000,000 men; and twenty years more were spent, with the labour, in each, of 360,000 men, in building the pyramid itself. Thus, in all, 7,000,000 men toiled in forced labour to rear this amazing monument. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne.*

the soil, stretched far and wide on the plateau of the Libyan Hills, a league west of Memphis—above the reach of the inundation—a series of subterranean palaces, which already awed the patriarch Job, as the "desolate places[1] which kings and counsellors of the earth had built for themselves." The landscape, everywhere, had been intersected with canals of irrigation, and lines of dykes, along which traffic might continue to pass freely during the inundations. But the Ancient Empire had passed away long before Jacob settled in Goshen, and dynasties had succeeded it under which Egypt steadily advanced in population, wealth, and general development; till, in the centuries of the Hebrew settlement, civilization in its highest forms, as understood in the valley of the Nile, surrounded the immigrants on every hand.

The dead level of a river delta must always have made the landscapes of Goshen, in some respects, monotonous. But even a flat surface, when broken by towns and villages, and diversified by trees rising from amidst a prospect of varied fertility, may have quiet charms of its own, as we see in not a few views of town and country in Holland.

The year was virtually divided into three seasons; that in which the cities and hamlets rose like islands above the universal sea of Nile waters, with the dykes and elevated roads stretching out like threads between: then, the months in which the fields and pastures were in their glory, falling in what are our winter months, which in Egypt are so delightful as to make life, in itself, an enjoyment. No one, indeed, can tell their delightfulness who has not been in the country at this season. And finally, a time of scorching heat

[1] Job iii. 14. Olshausen. Ewald and Merx translate it "pyramids;" De Wette, "funeral monuments."

and hardened, stone-like ground, when the moisture of the yearly inundation had been dried up by the sun. But even at this season, Egypt has charms all its own. The morning is deliciously cool, and through the day the sun pours a flood of dazzling splendour from a cloudless sky of the deepest azure, while the transparent air brings out even distant objects with wondrous clearness, through an atmosphere trembling as if heated over a flame. Both at morning and evening, the play of the light sheds countless tints of gold, or rose, or violet, on the clouds or on the Arabian hills. A sunset at Suez, described by Ebers, and similar to others I myself have watched, was doubtless like many gazed at with wonder by the Hebrews in the Delta. "The water quivered in still lovelier colours than at noon, and the finely-formed Ataka hills on the west shore, stretching away to the south till they seemed to fade into the glowing horizon, were bathed in blue and violet mists, which, after a time, gave place to a splendour of colour that I never saw elsewhere on the Nile. The mountains looked as if they were a molten mass of blended pomegranate and amethyst, and, as such, mirrored themselves in the waves which ran up to their feet—ebbing and retiring, moment by moment."[1]

But even night in Egypt, compared with that of other lands, is a dream of beauty; for the moon shines out with wondrous brightness, and, in her absence, unnumbered stars make the heavens white with glory.

The villages and hamlets of the Delta in Jacob's day, as now, were built on mounds raised high enough to protect from the yearly inundation, the mud huts of which they

[1] *Durch Gosen*, p. 57. Burton no less glowingly paints the colours of the atmosphere in Egypt, at sunset and sunrise. *Pilgrimage to Meccah*, p. 109. It must, indeed, strike every one who lives for any length of time on the Nile.

consisted. Canals, led from the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, and, subdivided into numberless lesser channels and rivulets, covered the landscape with a vast net-work of irrigation, and made it impossible to pass from one place to another except along the dykes; which at once regulated the admission of the yearly flood and supplied the country with practicable roads. Creaking water-wheels, turned by buffaloes, asses, or camels, raised water night and day into the canals, from the lower bed of the Nile, even then, sunk in the dry season, beneath deep banks of the fertilizing soil it has deposited in the course of countless ages; banks, necessarily, much deeper and higher now. High palms marked from a distance the raised hamlets, lofty dove-cots, always near each other, serving as a second characteristic; for the huts of to-day are indistinguishable till one approaches them, and in a country so unchanging they have doubtless been always the same. Simple in the extreme, they consist of only two rooms, except in rare cases, and are built only of the mud dried into bricks in the hot sun—a few days sufficing to raise them from the ground to the roof. Such a landscape is inevitably monotonous, but it is relieved by the variety of the produce on every hand; and canals, palms, water-wheels, villages, camels, flocks of birds in the waters and meadows, and the almost naked, sunburnt fellahs —poor and wretched beyond measure, amidst the infinite bounty of nature—keep awake the interest of the modern traveller.

The condition of the peasantry seems always to have been miserable in Egypt, though it may have been much less so among the Hebrews in an isolated district like Goshen. But even as far back as the time of Cheops, the builder of the Great Pyramid, long before Abraham visited the Nile

valley, there had been a huge clamour of the oppressed against the oppressor, from one end of the land to the other; a cry of anguish and bitter agony which since that time has often risen from Egypt. The will of the tyrant has always ruled, whether it ordered the building of the Great Pyramid or the making a barrage for the Nile. The land may have changed its religion, its language, and its population; the lot of the fellah has been always the same whether a Pharaoh,[1] a Sultan, or a Pacha reigned. No wonder that statues of Cheops, broken and dishonoured, have been discovered in our day near the Temple of the Sphinx, in deep wells, into which they had been ignominiously thrown, ages ago, in popular risings against his tyranny.[2] In the days of Abraham it was the same as in the then long-vanished Ancient Empire. The capital had been transferred from Memphis, in the north, to Thebes, in the south, but the working classes as well as the peasants had still a very hard lot. Shrinking before the stick of the taskmaster, which was constantly over them, they had to toil from morning to night, to gain a meagre support for themselves and their households. A letter of this era, from a scribe to his son, trying to induce him to follow learning rather than a trade, paints the condition of the blacksmith, the metal-worker, the stone-cutter, and the quarry-man, the barber, the boatman, the mason, the weaver, the maker of arms, the courier, the dyer, and the shoemaker as alike to be pitied.[3] Yet Ebers has given us a sketch of the crowd at Thebes in the time of Moses, which, in part at least, corroborates the scribe. "Under a wide-spreading sycamore," says he, "a vender of eatables, spirituous drinks, and acids

[1] The name Pharaoh is now equivalent, among the Arabs, to "tyrant." Burton

[2] Mariette, *Lettre à M. le Vicomte de Rougé*, p. 7.

[3] Maspero, p. 123. This letter is there given in full.

for cooling the water, had set up his stall, and close to him a crowd of boatmen and drivers shouted and disputed as they passed the time in eager games of morra. Many sailors lay on the decks of the vessels, others on the shore: here in the thin shade of a palm-tree, there in the full blaze of the sun; from whose burning rays they protected themselves by spreading over their faces the cotton cloths which served them for cloaks.

"Between the sleepers passed bondmen and slaves, brown and black, in long files, one behind the other, bending under the weight of heavy burdens, which had to be conveyed to their destination at the temples, for sacrifice, or to the dealers in various wares. Builders dragged blocks of stone, which had come from the quarries of Chennu and Suan, on sledges, to the site of a new temple; labourers poured water under the runners that the heavily loaded and dried wood should not take fire.

"All these working men were driven with sticks by their overseers, and sang at their labours; but the voices of the leaders sounded muffled and hoarse, though, when, after their frugal meal, they enjoyed an hour of repose, they might be heard loud enough. Their parched throats refused to sing in the noontide of their labour. Thick clouds of gnats followed these tormented gangs, who with dull and spirit-broken endurance suffered alike the stings of the insects and the blows of their drivers."[1]

The children of the poor lived, to a great extent, on the pith of the papyrus plant, and bread made of the pounded seeds of the lotus flower,[2] and radishes, onions, and garlic

[1] *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 61.

[2] *Uarda*, p. 197. Diodorus says that a child did not cost its parents 20 drachmæ, about fifteen shillings, for food and clothing till it was a good size. The lotus and papyrus grew wild in vast quantities, and children ran about naked.

were the staple food of their parents [1] But in Goshen, at least, the Hebrews had fish for the catching, and cucumbers, melons, and leeks,[2] which are still the food of the humbler Egyptians, though the fish now used is salt.[3] The Nile indeed was, and still is, wondrously rich in fish, and in no country do melons and other fruits and vegetables of the climate grow more luxuriantly. When the river shrinks back into its bed, all useful grains and plants shoot up with marvellous rapidity and vigour. Wheat, barley, spelt, maize, haricot beans, lentils, peas, flax, hemp, onions, scallions, citrons, cucumbers, melons, almost cumber the ground. The lotus, in Joseph's day, floated on the waters, and innumerable waterfowl built their nests among the papyrus reeds along the banks. Between the river or its branch, and the far-off desert, lay wide fields. Near the brooks and water-wheels rose shady sycamores and groves of date-palms carefully tended. The fruitful plain, indeed, watered and manured every year by the inundation, was framed in the desert like a garden flower-bed within its gravel path.

Memphis,[4] the capital of the empire in the time of Joseph, lay on the west side of the Nile, about 12 miles south of the present Cairo, and about 20 south of the great Temple- and University-city of On or Heliopolis; the Jerusalem of Egypt. Protected on the east, by the Nile, against attacks from Arabia, Assyria, Persia, and even Scythia, to which that frontier was always exposed, it had

[1] *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 303. 1,600 talents = £360,000 worth, were consumed during the building of the Great Pyramid. Herod., ii. 125. Plin., *N. H.*, xxxvi. 17.

[2] Num. xi. 5.

[3] Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 207. Burton says that garlic and onions are always specially in favour in lands liable to fevers and agues, as natural preventives. *Pilgrimage to Meccah*, p. 23.

[4] *Eine Aegypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. pp. 55–57, 210, 212. Memphis was dedicated to the goddess Ptah; the word means "The home of Ptah." Lengerke, p. 350.

on the west only the feeble Libyan tribes, separated from it by a range of hills, and was thus comparatively safe. The plain on which it was built, though resting on the limestone rock, was originally a marsh ; but an embankment raised in remote antiquity by Menes, the founder of the Ancient Empire, cut off the overflow of the Nile, and the swamps were drained into neighbouring lakes, which, with the river, surrounded the city with a strong defence of water.

The area of Memphis, like that of all Eastern cities, was large in proportion to its population, embracing a circuit of at least 15 miles,[1] but in this was included much open ground laid out as gardens, besides space for public buildings, temples, and palaces, and the barracks of the garrison, in the fortress known as the White Castle. Within the wall, with its ramparts and bastions, which formed the fortifications of the city, stood the old palace of the kings, a stately structure of brick, with courts, corridors, chambers, and halls without number ; veranda-like out-buildings of gaily painted wood ; and a magnificent pillared banqueting hall. Verdurous gardens surrounded it, and a whole host of labourers tended the flower beds and shady alleys, the shrubs and the trees ; or kept the tanks clean and fed the fish in them.[2] The mound which curbed the inundations of the Nile was so essential to the very existence of the city, that even the Persians, who destroyed or neglected the other great works of the country, annually repaired it.[3] The climate was wonderfully healthy, and the soil beyond measure fertile, while the views from the walls were famous among both the Greeks and Romans. Bright green meadows stretched round the city, threaded everywhere by canals thick

[1] Diodorus, i. 50. 150 stadia.
[2] Ebers, *The Sisters*, vol. i. p. 130.
[3] Herod., ii. 99.

with beds of the lotus flower. Trees of such girth that three men could not encircle them with outstretched arms, rose in clumps ; the wide gardens supplied Rome with roses even in winter, and the gay vineyards yielded wine of which poets sang.[1] Its position, moreover, in the "narrows" of Egypt, where the Arabian and Libyan hills, hitherto girding in the narrow valley of the river, begin to diverge and form the Delta, gave Memphis the command of all the trade of the country, both up and down the stream.

It may have been surpassed in the grandeur of its temples by Thebes,[2] the capital of the Middle Empire, in southern Egypt, but that city had fewer of them, and it had no such public or commercial buildings. A spacious and beautiful temple in Memphis honoured the goddess Isis, while that of the sacred bull, Apis, famous for its colonnades, its oracle, and its processions, was the cathedral of Egypt, attracting countless worshippers and maintaining a numerous, rich, and learned priesthood. Apis, or Hapi—to the Egyptians, the most perfect expression of divinity in an animal form—had, moreover, a second temple, also, in the necropolis—afterwards enlarged and called the Serapeion—in which was the Nilometer, for recording the yearly rise of the inundation. But the Temple of Ptah, the Egyptian Vulcan, to whom the scarabæus beetle was sacred, was the most ancient local shrine. Its great northern court had been erected before Joseph's day, and Rameses the Third afterwards raised in it six colossal portrait statues, of himself, his queen, and their four sons. One of these which I saw, 45 feet high, still lies, overthrown, in an open grove of palms, among the mounds of ruin, in a pool of water left by the inundations, which

[1] Diodor. i. 96. Pliny, xiii. 10 ; xvi. 21. Martial, vi. 80. Athenæus, i. 20.
[2] Thebes = No Amon = Home of Amon. Gesenius, *Thes.*

always, year by year, cover the spot—its back upwards and the name of Rameses on the belt—the last memorial of the great king. Spacious and magnificent eastern, western, and southern courts were added in later but still ancient times. It was at Memphis that Herodotus, nearly 1,500 years after Joseph's death,[1] made his longest stay in Egypt, and thither came, from time to time, many of the sages of antiquity to learn the sciences and philosophy for which its priests were famous.

The scanty remains of the city are strewn over a large space, but consist only of a few blocks of granite, broken pottery, and fragments of brick; for successive generations have, age after age, used its ruins as a great quarry for all kinds of buildings. But the plain amid which Memphis stood is still, as of old, wide and fertile; the level of it pleasantly varied here and there by a succession of palm groves which run out to the bank of the river, and in some cases spring from richly green surroundings. Behind these groves and the outlying plain rise the pink and yellow African hills, beyond which again, fourteen miles to the northwest, rise the great pyramids of Gizeh, kings of Lower Egypt; and between them and Memphis, still on the low plateau of rock west of the Nile, behind the plain stretching to the river, four other groups of smaller but still gigantic pyramids looked down, like hills, on the sacred city. But these were only sentinel towers, after all, over a population of the dead beneath the plain, immeasurably greater than that which streamed through the busy streets of the huge Metropolis. The whole ground, a shelf of rock beneath the rich soil, is honeycombed for well-nigh forty miles with the mummy tombs of ancient Memphis, and the region about it

[1] Joseph was taken to Egypt *circa* B.C. 1912. Herodotus died *circa* B.C. 400.

—the vast bulk of their inmates, numbering millions, lying embalmed in rock-cut chambers known as mummy pits, where they are huddled together in interminable rows and stacks, sometimes near the surface, but often deep down, with shaft-like entrances to their dismal resting-places. But human remains are not the only tenants of this amazing cemetery. Vast galleries are found, once filled with mummies of ibises, in red jars, now in many cases emptied of their contents.

But the greatest wonder of the Memphis necropolis is the gallery in which stand the tombs of the sacred bulls, and these tombs themselves. How strange a light does it throw on the religious ideas of that world in which Israel lived while on the Nile, to wander through that vast avenue of the sepulchres of deified oxen! These tombs open from long galleries hewn out in the rock, as high and broad as huge tunnels, great side-chambers running out from their sides say every fifty yards, in high-arched vaults, under each of which reposes the most magnificent sarcophagus that can be conceived. The vaults are about twenty-six feet high, and are paved and roofed with wrought stone from the quarries of the Mokatta hills, not far off. The whole series reaches a length of three hundred and eighty yards, along which arch after arch, into which you have to descend a little from the central gallery, was once tenanted by a mummied ox-god. In twenty-four of the chambers, indeed, the huge sarcophagi still remain; monster coffins about thirteen feet long, seven feet wide, and eleven high, and weighing not less than sixty-five tons. Many are of black or red granite, polished like glass, and cut out of one block: some are of limestone equally well finished. The galleries now open, date from about the time when the Israelites were in Egypt,

but others still closed, are nearly four thousand years old. The mummy once laid in its place, the entrance to the chamber was walled up, but worshippers still came to engrave their names, and prayers to the dead Apis, on the wall, or on the rock close by. Abraham had perhaps seen the processions of this strange worship, for it was already ancient in his day,[1] and it survived to the last periods of Egyptian history, when, Christianity having dispersed the priests, the tombs were abandoned after having been violated, and were then gradually buried beneath the sands of the desert. It was reserved to M. Mariette to bring them again to light in 1851, after an oblivion of more than 1,400 years.[2]

But everything is wonderful round Memphis. You walk for miles over the high drifted sand, under which countless grand tombs, built on the rock, have for thousands of years been buried. The whole surface of the ground is strewn with fragments of pottery in countless millions: a characteristic of the sites of all ancient oriental cities and towns. The mummy pits underneath are filled for acre after acre, and mile after mile, with the shrivelled remains of innumerable dead, but present no attractions except the ghastly horrors of a boundless charnel house. Here and there an entrance has been scooped out in the sand to built tombs, over which the drift from the desert lies deep, and some of these are of intense interest. One, rising in what was once a long street of tombs, though completely covered up on its exterior, so that it looks more like a subterranean rock-cut tomb than a building on the ancient surface of the ground, is very striking. To enter it I had to go down a slope of sand; but the whole interior has been cleared, and is in

[1] It was established by the second king of the Second Dynasty. Maspero, p. 50.
[2] Mariette, *Mémoire sur la Mère d'Apis*, 1856.

perfect preservation. It is the "Mastaba," or built tomb of one "Ti," who lived about 4,500 years ago—that is, long before Abraham's day. Nothing could exceed the beauty or truth to nature of the countless sculptures in very low relief, just standing out, in fact, and no more than that, from the stone on which they are carved. Ti himself stood before me in his wig, and false beard, and necklace, and kilt pointed in front and carefully set out in its plaits and narrow foldings: a long staff in one hand and in the other his baton of office, for he was a dignitary of the highest rank, in his lifetime. His wife, "the beloved of her husband," stands often at his side in the many repetitions of his presentation, and with them are their two sons, who were "princes" through the high birth of their mother, for Ti himself was of humble origin. On the various walls the whole story of Egyptian life in these remote times is told with inimitable skill in the endless figures and scenes portrayed. The killing of the ox for sacrifice or food; the details of kitchen mysteries, fattening geese, feeding the pigeons, cranes, and other fowls of the poultry yard; laden barges taking corn down the Nile, for sale; the wild creatures of the eastern or western hills seen from the tomb; a statue of Ti borne on a sledge to the place where it is to be set up, the slaves pouring water on the runners to ease the friction; a picture of the domestic bake-house and pottery; harvest scenes, showing every detail of agriculture from the treading in of the grain by the feet of oxen driven over the soil still wet from the overflow of the Nile, to the last incidents of the harvest; shipbuilding scenes, from the hewing of the trees of which the vessels are to be built, to their calking, as they rest on the stocks, with all the tools used in the various stages. Carpenters, masons, sculptors, glass-blowers, chair-

makers, leather-workers, water-carriers—all have their separate illustrations, as members of the great man's establishment, which was complete in itself, trained slaves doing all that was needed, of whatever kind. Hunting and fishing have their minute representations, showing the pleasures of the country life of the rich to have been just the same then as now. We can, indeed, restore the Egypt of the patriarchs with wonderful fulness from the walls of this single tomb; and it is necessary to keep in mind its revelations if we would bring before our minds the country in which the Hebrews lived, and from which they broke away, under Moses.

On, or Heliopolis, the City of the Sun, according to Ebers, marked the southern limit of Goshen, as Zoan or Tanis, its northern, on the west side. It was there that Joseph found his Egyptian bride, the daughter of the high priest of its great temple, and it was as the priest Osarsiph, of this sanctuary, that Moses, probably by a confusion of his name with that of Joseph, was handed down by the Egyptians in their traditions.[1]

That Hebrews lived in On in the times of the Oppression can hardly be doubted, for a papyrus still gives us the names of the civil and military officers charged, in the reign of Rameses III., about one hundred years after the Exodus, with the oversight of 2,083 Hebrews residing there; descendants, very probably, of some who failed to make their escape with their brethren, or chose to remain behind. It was in some respects the very metropolis of Egyptian religion and "wisdom," for the most famous University of the land flourished in it, and the old Sun-god Ra was the local divinity of the Heliopolitan "nome;"[2] the name On meaning

[1] Jos., *c. Apion*, i. 26.

[2] *Eine Ægypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 223.

"the sun."[1] The setting sun, Tum, was, however, also worshipped as the luminary of the Nether World, with Shu, the son of Ra, and Tafnet, his lion-headed daughter, Osiris, Isis, Hathor, and the cat-headed divinity, Bast. Nor did even these exhaust the pantheon of On. It was also the seat of the worship of the phœnix, an imaginary bird, famous in Egyptian mythology, and of the sacred calf, Mnevis,[2] the rival of the sacred bull Apis, of Memphis, which was said to have sprung from it. It had had its shrine at On since the long past days of the Second Dynasty. Sacred lions were also worshipped in honour of the goddess Tafnet. Worse than all, however, in Joseph's time, and till after the expulsion of the Hyksos, human sacrifices of red-haired foreign captives were offered to Typhon, the red god of evil, and to Sati.[3]

The temple was in its full glory in the days of Joseph, and during the centuries of the Hebrew sojourn. Great colleges of priests lived in chambers specially built for them within its holy precincts, and, besides taking charge of the sacred animals, attended to the services of the many gods honoured in its worship. In addition to these, there were numbers of learned priests connected with the medical,

[1] The Greek name of the city of On Heliopolis means, "the City of the Sun," and it had an equivalent name in Egyptian, Ir-ha-Kheres, "the City of the Sun;" a name on which Isaiah (xix. 18) plays by saying it shall become "the city of the destruction" of idols, Ir-ha-heres. Jeremiah calls it Beth-Shemesh, "the house of the Sun-god"—Jer. xliii. 13—and Ezekiel changes the Egyptian word On into the Hebrew word Aven, "nothingness." Ezek. xxx. 17. Brugsch explains On as meaning, "The Obelisks." *History of Egypt*, i. 128.

[2] Merx and Pressel speak of Mnevis as black, but Ebers says it was bright-coloured, which seems to agree better with the Israelites making a "*golden* calf" in imitation of it, if that idol were really intended to be so.

[3] Aahmes I., the conqueror of the Hyksos, abolished human sacrifice, which the Hyksos had perhaps introduced from Syria, substituting wax figures of men, of which three were offered daily. It is noteworthy, that though native Egyptian monuments do not speak of human sacrifice, the design on the "offering seal" used is a man bound, with a sword at his throat.

theological, and historical faculties of the temple; the special depositaries of the science, religious and secular, for which Egypt was renowned. The observatory of the temple was famous, and it is to its priest-astronomers we are indebted for the exact computation of the length of the year. Of the four great Temple Universities of the land—Memphis, Thebes, Sais, and On—that of On held the first rank. Its high-priest came next in dignity to the Pharaoh himself, and was a prince of the empire—the Piromis, "the noble and the good"—and thus the marriage of Joseph to the daughter of so august a dignitary at once secured his position in the state. From its higher priests, moreover, no fewer than ten members of the great priestly council of Pharaoh were chosen—that is, one-third of the whole. No centre of Egyptian influence more powerfully or abidingly affected the Hebrews than this great centre of Egyptian thought and worship.

Heliopolis, or On, lies five miles north-east of Cairo, along a well-made road which is in reality a dyke, to secure communication when the country is overflowed yearly by the Nile. I drove out in a European hack carriage, so fallen is the glory of old times, the horses bearing me, first through a line of French-looking boulevards, then between wide stretches of corn and clover, or gardens and orchards, poor enough compared with those of cooler regions. Canals from the great stream ran hither and thither, yielding, at short intervals, bright rills poured by water-wheels, from them, into lesser channels, branching off through the fields and enclosures. Clumps of fig-trees, tamarisks, and acacias varied the level monotony of the highway as I came near On, which is now a silent expanse of ploughed land, where not broken into heights by the mounds that mark ancient

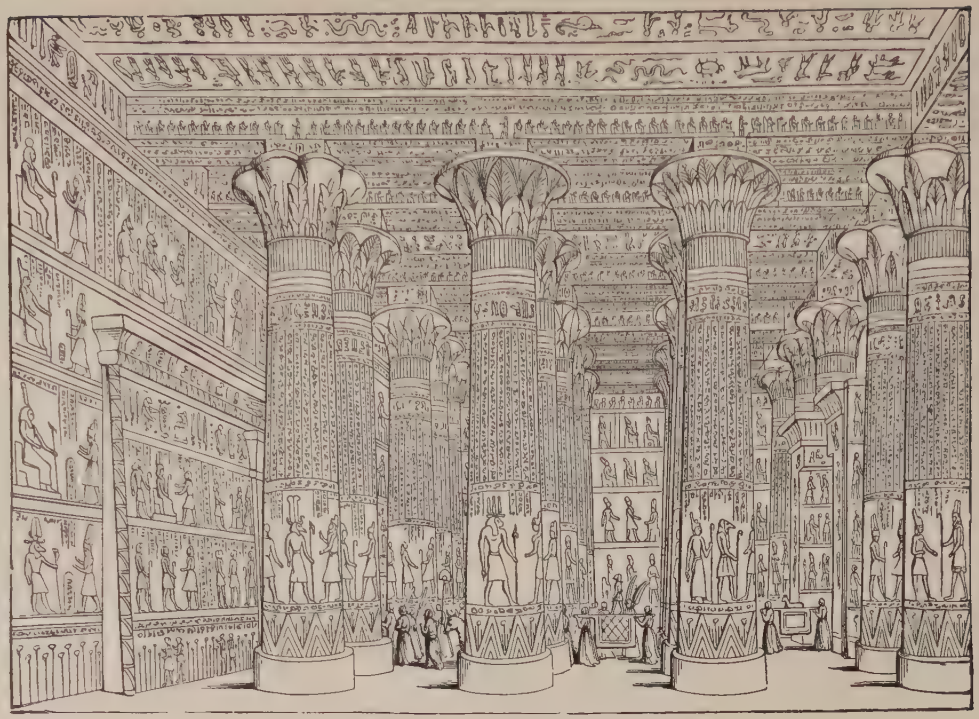
walls or buildings. Nothing of the great University city, or of its renowned schools and colleges, remains but a single obelisk, the base of which is deeply imbedded in the mud of ages of annual inundations. Long mounds rise here and there, and a line of heaped confusion along three sides of a square, far back from the obelisk, marks the site of the old city and its temple, and of the city walls. There may be wonderful secrets beneath these huge memorials of antiquity, but On has to be sought, nowadays, rather in the public and private buildings of Cairo, for which its wrought stone furnished a ready-made quarry, than within the bounds of its ancient site. The only person I saw was a poor peasant woman, in a blue slip, very dirty and wretched looking, who stood beside the obelisk, watching me with curious eyes, as I wandered over the famous spot, among clumps of prickly pear and thorny shrubs, which now spring rank where processions of priests once chanted their hymns and offered their sacrifices.

No temple in antiquity could dispense with a living spring to supply the water so essential for purifications, libations, and other sacred uses. Close to On, therefore, we still find its famous "Spring of the Sun"—a fitting name for a fountain dedicated to the temple of the great Sun-god, Ra. It is now used for irrigating the neighbouring fields, by the help of a water-wheel, turned by a blindfolded ox. One stream from it waters a spot of high interest in Christian legend, the garden, beautifully kept, in which stands the gigantic sycamore under which tradition says the Virgin and Child once rested during the Flight to Egypt. Unfortunately, however, we know that the present tree was not planted till after 1672, its predecessor having died in 1655. Could we believe in the touching connection of the spot with our

Saviour's infancy, the neighbourhood would be doubly famous, for it was at On that Joseph wooed and won the dark-skinned Asenath, that Moses gained his Egyptian learning, that Plato and Herodotus sought insight into its mysteries, and Dionysius the Areopagite noticed and noted the darkness that veiled the sky when Christ died on Calvary.

In the time of the Hebrew sojourn in Egypt, a visitor having reached the artificial platform on which all Heliopolis was built, and wishing to visit the great Sun-temple, passed first under the cool shade of a sacred grove, planted on the edges of the sacred lake in its grounds. A pavement of stone, cemented with asphalt, about a hundred feet broad and three or four times as long, now opened before him, lined on each side with huge sphinxes of yellow marble, placed at regular distances. This brought him to the great gates or pylons; huge structures standing quite apart from all else. He then passed under the immense chief gate, adorned, like that of all Egyptian temples, with a broad winged disk of the sun. The widely opened doors were flanked on each side by a forest of lofty obelisks, intended as emblems of the solar rays, and nowhere else so numerous as here, where they fittingly adorned the entrance of the great Temple of the Sun. Huge flagstaffs, from which fluttered long red and blue streamers, contended with these in height. A great stone-flagged court, bordered to right and left with a portico resting on lines of pillars, came next—its centre, the sacred spot on which offerings were presented to the god. The whole front of the temple proper was now seen rising, fortress-like, at one side of the court; its surface covered with brightly painted figures and inscriptions. Inside the porch was a lofty hall of approach; then the great hall, the roof of which, sown over with thousands of golden stars,

rested on four rows of gigantic pillars. The shafts and lotus-formed capitals, the side walls and niches of this immense chamber, indeed all objects around, were covered with many-coloured paintings and hieroglyphics. The huge pillars, the roof immensely high and proportionally broad and long, filled the mind with awe, while the air was loaded with the odours of incense, and of the fragrant gums and spices of the laboratory of the temple. Soft music from unseen players seemed never to cease; though broken now and then by the low of the sacred ox, or of the sacred cow of Isis, or the screech of the sparrow-hawk of Horus, which were housed in neighbouring chambers. As often as the bellowing of the ox or cow was heard, or the shrill cry of the hawk, the kneeling worshippers touched the stone pavement of the forecourt with their brow. Meanwhile all eyes eagerly gazed, ever and anon, into the hidden interior of the temple, where numerous priests stood in the holy of holies, no doubt like that which I saw at Esneh—a huge single stone, with a stone door, hollowed into a deep recess—the dark resting-place of the image of the god. Some of the priests wore high ostrich feathers over their bald heads, others the skins of panthers over white linen robes; some bowed or raised themselves as they sang or murmured litanies, others swung censers or poured out pure water from golden vessels, as libations to the gods. Only the most favoured Egyptians dared enter the gigantic hall, and then, the eye, the ear, and even the breathing were surrounded by influences farthest from those of every-day existence, contracting the bosom and agitating the nerves. Overwhelmed and cut off from the outer world, the worshipper had to seek support outside himself, in the divinity whom the voices of the priests, the mysterious music, and



TEMPLE OF ESNEH.

the sounds of the holy animals appeared to indicate as close at hand.[1]

Dean Stanley's description of this great temple is striking. "Over the portal, we can hardly doubt, was the figure of the Sun-god; not in the sublime indistinctness of the natural orb, nor yet in the beautiful impersonation of the Grecian Apollo, but in the strange, grotesque form of the Hawk-headed monster. Enter, and the dark temple opens and contracts successively into its outermost, its inner, and its innermost hall; the Osiride figures in their placid majesty support the first; the wild and savage exploits of kings and heroes fill the second; and in the furthest recess of all, underneath the carved figure of the Sun-god, and beside the solid altar, sate, in his gilded cage, the sacred hawk, or lay crouched on his purple bed the sacred black calf Mnevis, or Urmer; each the living, almost incarnate, representation of the deity of the temple. Thrice a day, before the deified beast, the incense was offered, and once a month the solemn sacrifice. Each on his death was duly embalmed and deposited in a splendid sarcophagus. One such mummy calf is still to be seen at Cairo. The sepulchres of the long succession of deified calves at Heliopolis corresponded to that of the deified bulls at Memphis."[2]

[1] See Ebers, *Eine Ægypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 109. Other authorities, however, describe Egyptian temples somewhat differently. Thus Schaafe writes: "Egyptian temples were so constructed, as to intensify the earnestness and enthusiasm of the worshipper by chambers continually smaller and lower. The turns to be taken were all pointed out, no going in another way was allowed, and no mistake was possible. Visitors wandered full of awe between the rows of sacred beasts. The gates rose, afar, high and vast: then came another court; the walls were closer, the courts on a smaller scale, the floor was higher. All was subordinated to one end. Going on farther, the dissipation of thought natural to the open air passed away amidst the solemnity of the building, and the holiness of the symbols and pictures with which all objects were covered. The consecrated walls closed in, ever nearer, round the worshipper, till at last only the priestly foot could enter the lonely, echoing chamber of the god." *Kunstgeschichte*, vol. i. p. 394.

[2] *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 88.

Strabo visited Heliopolis about the time of the birth of Christ, and found the town deserted, and the temple, though still standing, a mere desolate memorial of greatness passed away. The neighbouring canals, long neglected, had formed broad marshes before it. Priests and philosophers, canons and professors, alike were gone from the spacious mansions round the cloisters of the vast courts. Only a few lower priests and vergers lingered about, to maintain what still remained of worship, or to show strangers over the silent quadrangles and deserted cloisters; but they still pointed out the house where Plato had lived for years, when studying in their schools. Now, as I have said, the solitary obelisk still standing, and great mounds full of fragments of marble and granite, and the wreck of a sphinx, alone recall the site. The water of the Nile overflows the whole landscape each year, and rises nearly six feet up the stalk of the obelisk.

The only other town of Goshen, or on its borders, to be noticed till later, was Tanis, the Zoan of the Bible, a place built only seven years after Hebron, in Palestine.[1] The frontier town of Goshen on the north-west, it lay far to the north of On—on the right bank of the old Tanitic mouth of the Nile. This stream overflowed the fields of the Hebrews, year by year, to the envious regret of the Egyptians, who regarded a blessing enjoyed by foreigners as a misfortune to themselves. Mythological fables expressed this feeling, by stigmatizing these waters as those by which Typhon floated out the corpse of the murdered Osiris to the ocean; but their real antipathy was from the channel winding through the lands of Semitic settlers. Tanis had been, apparently, founded by old Phœnician colonists, and was already a resi-

[1] Num. xiii. 22.

dence of the Pharaohs before the invasion of the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, with their allied Canaanitish and Arabian tribes, who, in their turn, made it their capital, adorning it with all the architectural glories of a great Egyptian city, during their reign of five hundred years. The hour came, however, when, amidst the flames and devastations of war, they were driven out of the land, and Tanis was left for over three centuries a deserted waste of scorched and blackened ruins. Rameses the Second, the Oppressor, at last turned his eyes on it and resolved to rebuild it, and make the new Tanis, thus created, his northern metropolis. Egyptian architecture confined its highest efforts to temples and tombs, employing the arts of the sculptor, the draughtsman, and the painter, to add the accessories of statues, sphinxes, reliefs, and sanctuaries or resting places for the dead. Palaces have mouldered into the clay of which their materials were composed; the houses of the general population have long ago crumbled into dust; even the remains of public structures have to be sought under the mounds which they have themselves created; but the great ancient temples and tombs defy the ravages of time, yielding only to the violence of man and the convulsions of nature. In the Tanis of Rameses the Temple was the supreme glory. There were, no doubt, palaces, and store-houses for military and general uses, mansions and gardens, with every ornament of art to heighten their charms, and countless homes of the general population, but the Temple and its grounds were the chief feature of the city and occupied a large proportion of the space within its walls.

Three-fourths of the ruins now met in these wide precincts are the work of the architects, sculptors, and artists of Rameses. The sphinxes and statues still left uninjured

from the wreck of the former Tanis were duly appropriated, after the effacement of all inscriptions connected with their Hyksos creators, but the great king also laid all the quarries of Egypt, from Assouan to the hills of Mokattam, near Memphis, under contribution, to embellish his new capital. The Temple raised for his glory was the largest and most splendid that had ever graced the Delta, destined nominally to the worship of the sun and other gods, but covered throughout with inscriptions and sculptures in his own honour. Countless reliefs on its walls commemorated his victories, and his portrait statues of all sizes and materials rose at every point in the spacious grounds. Fragments remain of one of these—an ear, a toe, and part of an arm—that show the scale on which this self-homage, as to a human god, was carried out. They tell of a statue the most gigantic ever known. Cut out of one great block of the hard red granite of Assouan, it stood, crowned with the double mitre of Lower and Upper Egypt, a hundred feet high; its tremendous pedestal raising it fifteen or twenty feet higher. It was thus from six to twelve feet loftier than the great obelisk at Karnak, the tallest in the world, and more than fifty feet above that which excites our wonder on the Thames embankment, at London. Its weight could not have been less than twelve hundred tons. How such a huge mass of stone could have been separated from the hill-side at Assouan, or floated hundreds of miles down the Nile, or dragged to its position and raised when brought to the spot for it, may be asked but cannot be answered. It adds to the difficulty when we remember that it must have been laid down at Tanis, in the rough, to be duly set up when carved into the royal image, and polished till it shone like glass. The Temple itself, in which it stood, was probably not more

than fifty-six feet high, and the tallest of the glittering forest of obelisks before the great gates was somewhat shorter, so that this mighty Colossus must have looked down on the sacred buildings and their accessories from a height of at least sixty feet; and must have been visible, in so flat a landscape, from a vast distance in every direction. So high, it would seem to say, is the Pharaoh above ordinary men!

In the time of Moses the banks of the Nile, at Tanis, were bordered by villas and gardens, and the stream, itself, was alive with traffic. A great flight of steps led from the water to the Temple grounds, in which the great sanctuary rose, more than half a mile from the river. As yet there was no Lake Menzeleh and no desert, but a wide plain round Tanis dotted with villages, overhung by sycamores and palms. Round the great Temple itself an endless display of sphinxes, statues, and obelisks amazed the visitor by their size, number, and glittering polish. An avenue nearly four hundred feet long, bordered by columns twelve yards high, each of a single stone, led from the Temple; the interval between the great pillars studded with obelisks, statues, and sphinxes in every colour of granite, and also in yellow stone; and at its end one found himself face to face with a vast gathering of gigantic portrait statues of the great Pharaohs, of distant centuries, brought from the temples of every part of Egypt to do honour to Rameses, who sat enthroned among the august assembly, the highest Colossus of all. The delights and beauties of the city, outside the sacred limits, have been already told us in the narrative of a contemporary of the Hebrews in this age:[1] a subject of the great king, with no such bitterness of oppression in his heart to hinder his pleasure, as filled the breast of enslaved Israel.

[1] See page 4.

The city had no less than seven names, connected with the gods worshipped in it, for the Egyptians gave their towns, in this way, many; sometimes, as in the cases of Edfu and Dendera, several hundreds. But, of the seven borne by Tanis, two are Semitic: nor is it unworthy of notice that one is "The Field of Zoan," the exact name of the town in one of the Psalms.[1] Another is: "The Town of Rameses," for it was rebuilt and embellished, doubtless by Hebrew forced labour in part, by Rameses II.

Rameses-Tanis—"the place of departure" for Palestine—is especially important as the scene of the wonders wrought by Moses before the Exodus. It appears, next to Thebes, to have been the spot most liked by the Oppressor—the greatest of all the Pharaohs—and was chosen by him as his home both before and after his wars with the Asiatic races, who could be so easily reached from it. It continued to be a large place even so late as the days of Christ, and rose on artificial mounds round the Temple, though a series of gray hills of rubbish, full of fragments of bricks and pottery, are now its only memorials. From these, the houses are seen to have been built of sun-dried bricks of Nile mud, small alike in themselves and in their rooms, which, however, were often numerous. The Fresh-water canal, which fills the ancient bed of the river branch, still floats pretty large fisher-boats, which ply their trade on the neighbouring Menzeleh sea; and it is curious to notice, that even to-day the fishermen and peasants of the district are essentially different in their figures and features from the common Egyptian fellah. They are shorter in stature, and the side face is not so good, but the likeness to the profiles of the sphinxes left by the Hyksos is unmistakable. Tanis was the local

[1] Ps. lxxviii. 43.

capital and the seat of government, to which the Semitic population round had free access, while Memphis and Thebes were more or less secluded from strangers. But all around is now a barren waste, except along the canal passing through the district; a resort of wild beasts and reptiles, dotted with swamps which breed malignant fevers.

CHAPTER II.

EGYPT BEFORE THE HEBREW SOJOURN.

When Joseph was led by his Ishmaelite owners as a slave, to the bazaar of Memphis, for sale, fourteen dynasties had already flourished and passed away in Egypt. Of these, ten had reigned in Memphis and four at Thebes, in the south, but a fifteenth had now risen—that of the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, who had invaded and conquered Lower Egypt, and set themselves on the throne of the Pharaohs. Mena or Menes, "the constant," the founder of Memphis and of the Egyptian nation, had obtained a site for his proposed city, by changing the course of a branch of the Nile. Building a huge dyke, he turned the river from its old bed and then filled up the old channel. Temples, reared first, were followed by a large population: the wonderful necropolis was begun, and pyramids were erected. From the beginning, society seems to have been thoroughly organized. The Memphian high priests were great personages in the young state: the king was already the Perao, or Pharaoh—"the Great House"—with his queen, his harem, and his children. There were nobles and serfs, an elaborate organization of court ceremonial, and vast numbers of officials and slaves who ministered to the royal wants or glory. There was a keeper of the royal wardrobe, a court hair-dresser and nail-trimmer, and court musicians and singers. High officials took charge of the royal domains, the granaries, the

cellars, the oil-chamber, the bakery, the butchering, and the stables. There were overseers of the public buildings, and numerous scribes, to record all public and private affairs. But amidst all this, there were taskmasters, from the first, over the wretched common people, who toiled at forced labour under the blows of the stick. The army was fully organized, but there were also men of science, to study the heavens for religious and other ends, and to measure the fields, and raise the great structures in which the king delighted. The successors of Mena followed in his steps. Arts, laws, science, and religion were zealously promoted. The worship of the bull Apis and the calf Mnevis was introduced, mines were opened in the peninsula of Sinai, and the earliest pyramid was built. Then came Cheops, the builder of the second, or Great, Pyramid, raised near the mysterious Sphinx, which itself was the work of some earlier, unknown king. The third pyramid followed, and then others. Literature grew apace; sculptures, perfect as those of the Greeks, as seen by some relics still left, showed the highest culture of genius; gorgeous tombs were multiplied, and the mines of Sinai were worked with vigour. The name of one of the first kings of the Sixth Dynasty, Merira Pepi, is found on the oldest monuments at Tanis, and his public works can be traced all over Egypt. His campaigns extended so far to the south that negroes were enlisted in his armies. Before long, ships sailed down the Red Sea to Punt or Somauli land, on the east of Africa, and returned with the products of that region. The whole country was full of activity of all kinds.

The capital was now transferred to Thebes, where monuments of the Twelfth Dynasty still remain. Amenemha I., who reigned about three thousand years before Christ,

extended the empire still farther to the south; and, after waging wars in all other directions, left the record of his victories on the walls of temples built by him in every part of Egypt. Usurtasen I., his successor, founded On, and raised its great Sun Temple, with its obelisks. Gold flowed in from Nubia, and turquoises from the mines at Sinai, to which a caravan road led from the Nile. Fortresses were built far south, against the negroes, and the glory of the empire increased on all sides. The tombs of Beni Hassan, with their wonderful pictures of Egyptian every-day life and work, date from the reign of Usurtasen II., who lived about the time of Abraham. A later king constructed Lake Mœris, on the Libyan edge of the desert, as a vast reservoir of the Nile inundation, of priceless worth to the land,[1] and also built the wonderful palace known as the Labyrinth, with three thousand halls and chambers, half of them above ground and the rest below it, with twelve covered courts. Herodotus and Strabo alike speak of it as an amazing work: the latter stating that it was a representation of the whole kingdom, with a palace for each of the twenty-seven nomes. Unfortunately for our knowledge of details, however, the province in which it stood worshipped the god Sebek, or Set, whose tutelary animal was the crocodile, on which account both it and its inhabitants were hated and ignored, for Sebek was the Satan of Egyptian mythology.

Egypt had now, more than ever, become the centre of civilization. Its schools, under the priests, were famous, and intellectual life in every form abounded. Sculpture and painting reached high perfection, and books on all sub-

[1] In the time of the Eleventh Dynasty the average height of the Nile inundation was nearly 7½ *yards* above that of our times. Brugsch, *History of Egypt*, vol. i. p. 167. This may in part be accounted for by the elevation of the land, since, by the Nile deposits.

jects were numerous ; temples, pyramids, and tombs were largely increased ; the country was everywhere improved by public works ; boundaries, public and private, were minutely fixed ; public registers kept ; industries of all kinds multiplied ; commerce with Libya, Palestine, and other regions covered the roads with caravans, and the waters with vessels ; gold and minerals were obtained from Sinai, and the general progress attracted a great immigration of Libyans, Cushites, and Asiatic shepherd tribes.

But prosperity in the case of Egypt, with a religion so debased and a people enslaved, was no security against revolution, when the central despotism fell into weak hands, as it did ere long. Civil wars broke out, and petty kingdoms rose, each claiming independence. Meanwhile, events on the Euphrates were destined to send a wave of invasion as far as the valley of the Nile, and substitute foreign for domestic rulers. In the obscurity of a period so remote, little definite is known beyond the fact that the nomadic races of Western Asia and Syria, perhaps driven forward by pressure from behind, or attracted by the richness of the Nile valley, united with the Phœnician colonists of the northern coast, and, having settled in ever greater numbers in the Delta, at last, taking advantage of the internal troubles of Egypt, rose against the Fourteenth native Dynasty, which then occupied Xois, its capital, in the centre of the Delta, and overthrew it. For a time all was misery. Fierce and uncultured, the rough shepherd warriors harried and devastated the land. Towns and temples were alike pillaged, burned, or destroyed ; the inhabitants who escaped massacre sinking, with their wives and children, into slavery. After the taking of Memphis, however, and the conquest of the whole Delta, the barbarians

fortunately elected a king who proved able to re-establish a settled government.

Two dangers were to be guarded against: the possible efforts of the Egyptian princes at Thebes, in the south, to organize a national resistance; and the risk of invasion on the north by the tribes of Canaan, Syria, and Elam. But the new king was equal to the occasion. Establishing a series of fortified posts in the Nile valley, to the south, and guarding the Isthmus of Suez with a strong force, he secured himself from both perils. He further established at Avaris, or Pelusium, at the extreme north-east edge of the Delta[1]—on the line of the great Egyptian wall—a vast intrenched camp, in which no fewer than 240,000 soldiers could be quartered. This he and his successors permanently maintained, as at once their supreme safeguard against invasion at the one point from which it could threaten, and as an inexhaustible depot from which to draw soldiers to defend the southern borders from attack by the native princes, and to overawe the population at large. Such vigour ere long naturally resulted in the conquest of all Egypt.

The Egyptians gave the name of Shous, or Shasu—the "Shepherds"—to the nomadic tribes of Syria, the Bedouins of their times; dark, lean, sharp-nosed, and with scanty beards, as shewn in the old Egyptian wall-paintings, like the Arabs of to-day; their king being distinguished by the Nile populations as the Hyk, or chief; whence their later Greek name of Hyksos.

It would appear, however, that these chiefs, thus known, were of a race distinct from the people known as the Shasu or Shepherds, whom they led to the invasion of Egypt.

[1] See the proofs of its position in the paper of Lepsius, *Monatsber. der k. Akad. der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*, Mai, 1866, and Ebers' *Ægypten und die Bücher Moses*, pp. 82, 211.

Among the portrait heads in the pictorial record of the campaign against the Kheta or Hittites, and the Naharaina tribes, sculptured on the west side of the Temple at Luxor, where I examined them, two are exactly like the well-known Hyksos sphinxes in every detail of their face : the slight eyebrows, the sub-aquiline nose, regaining the line of the forehead in its lower half ; the thick end of the nose ; the very peculiar slope of the underside of it ; the size and form of the lips, firm and solid, without any negroid fulness ; the angle of the beard ; the angle of the eye ; the high cheekbones ; the breadth of the face, and the enormously bushy hair. Every one of these distinctive features is peculiarly alike in the Syrian and in the Hyksos, so that it is not improbable that we have in these portraits, the type of the Hyksos in Northern Syria, who may have been pushed down towards Egypt by the Hittites in their conquering movements from the north. That the portraits are those of Hyksos no one can question who has seen the Hyksos sphinxes in the Gizeh Museum. Rulers are very often of a different race from their subjects, as we see at this day both in Europe and Asia, so that it is very probable that the strangely peculiar caste who have perpetuated their likeness in the monuments of ancient Tanis, and whose portraits still survive at Luxor, were the alien leaders of confederated shepherd tribes, as a Tartar is at the moment the Emperor of China ; a German, of Russia ; and a Frenchman, of Sweden and Norway.

The Hyksos were known in Egypt, not only as the shepherds, but also as "the archers," "the thieves," and "the robbers." Nor can we wonder at epithets which illustrate their special skill with the weapon of the age, or the ferocity which marked their invasion. How terrible their cruelty must have been in their first onslaught is implied in the fact

that the tradition of it wakes the bitter indignation of Manetho in the recital, twenty centuries later ; and the hatred of the conquered population vented itself at the time by fixing the vilest epithets—"the lepers," "the pestilence," "the accursed"—on their masters. But the influences of the civilization around soon told on them, and ere long the conquerors were vanquished, as regarded their barbarism, by the conquered. Despite their greater political and military ability, they felt themselves inferior to their subjects in moral and intellectual culture. Their kings soon found that it was better to develop the country than to plunder it ; and, as they themselves could not manage the fiscal details of the revenue, Egyptian scribes were admitted into the departments of the exchequer, and of the public service. Ere long, the advancement in civilization was striking. The court of the Pharaohs reappeared round the Shepherd Kings, with all its pomp and its crowd of functionaries, great and small. The religion of the Egyptians, without being officially adopted, was tolerated, and that of the Hyksos underwent some modifications to keep it from offending, beyond endurance, the sensibilities of the worshippers of Osiris. Sutekh, the warrior god of Canaan, and the national god of the conquerors, was identified with the Egyptian god Set. Tanis became the capital of the country, and saw its palaces and temples rebuilt and increased in number. Sphinxes sculptured at this period enable us to realize the characteristics of the race ; for the face differs widely from both the Egyptian and Semitic types. I was struck in examining those in the museum at Gizeh by their peculiar appearance. The eyes are small, the nose large and arched, while at the same time comparatively flat ; the chin is prominent, the lips thick, and the mouth depressed at the

extremities. The whole countenance is rude, and the thick hair of an enormous wig, as it would appear, hangs around the head like a mane, and appears to bury the face. The beard is worn long, in rows of small curls, but the upper lip is shaved. Such were the new conquerors, with their foreign lineaments, and their rough earnestness, who held Egypt in subjection for perhaps five hundred years, from about B.C. 2194 to B.C. 1683.

It was apparently under one of this race, whose name has come down to us, that Joseph became grand vizier—an honour which a foreign Shepherd King would be more willing to show to a member of a shepherd tribe than a native Pharaoh would have been. Known as Apopi in Egypt, he was the Aphobis of the Greeks; and as he seems to have been the restorer of Tanis, and the king under whom its rows of sphinxes were set up, it is not unlikely that in their striking features we may have his portrait.

Of this king, a papyrus in the British Museum fortunately preserves a few notices.[1] "It came to pass," says this precious document, "that the land of Egypt fell into the hands of the plague-like men, and there was no king in Upper Egypt. When Sekenen-Ra—the ruler—was king of the south land, the impure became masters of the fortress in the district of the Amu—the Semitic races of the Delta. Apopi was king in the city Avaris, and the whole land appeared before him with tribute; doing him service and delivering to him all the fair produce of the Delta. And Apopi chose for himself the god Set as his lord, and served no other god which was in Egypt. And he built for him a temple, in noble, enduring work. And when he appeared in the temple to celebrate a festival and to offer, he wore

[1] *Sallier Papyrus*, p. 1.

garlands as men do in the temple of Ra-Hormachuti." Determined to pick a quarrel with the Egyptian prince of Thebes, he had demanded that, like himself, he should give up the worship of his gods and honour Amon Ra alone ; but Ra-Sekenen, while yielding all else, had declined to pledge himself to this. A new message, however, was now contrived and sent off by Apopi, on the advice of his "experts" or scribes, and delivered to the governor of Thebes, the city of the south. This dignitary, on the arrival of the messenger, who had hurried to him without resting day or night, asks him, "Who sent thee here to the south country? Why hast thou come as a spy?" "Then the messenger answered, 'King Apopi it is who sent me to thee, and he says, "Give me up the well for cattle which is in the . . . of the land. . . ."'[1] Then the ruler of the south was troubled and knew not what to say to King Apopi." He nerved himself, however, and returned an answer, unfortunately lost, to the messenger, who then went back to Apopi's court. Meanwhile Ra-Sekenen "called together the ancients and the nobles of the south country, and the chief men and captains, and told them the message which King Apopi had sent. And, behold, they cried out with one mouth : 'It is great wickedness!' Yet they knew not what answer to send, whether good or bad. Then King Apopi sent"—but here the document abruptly ends.[2]

Strange to say, we can tell some personal details respecting the hero who was thus forced to choose between war and abject submission. Ra-Sekenen, "the Brave," was the third of the same title, and his resistance to the demands of Apopi led to the great war of independence, which lasted, it is

[1] Brugsch translates the words as referring to the stopping of a canal.

[2] Brugsch, vol. i. p. 241. Ebers, *Ægypten*, p. 206. *Records of the Past*, vol. viii. p. 3.

believed, for about a hundred and fifty years, though some think it ended in eighty, leading at the close to the expulsion of the Hyksos dynasty, twenty-four thousand of whom, says Manetho, went to Palestine and settled there. Ra-Sekenen, who began the revolt, fell in battle, but his body was carried off by his soldiers and duly embalmed. It is nearly, if not quite, four thousand years since he died the death of a hero, and his mummy had lain as his friends had left it, though not, it may be, in the same resting place, till a few years ago, when the coffin in which it was preserved was by chance discovered. From Upper Egypt, the withered body of the long dead warrior was forthwith taken to Cairo, and put in the museum, which was then at Boulak. There the mummy was unrolled in 1886, and Ra-Sekenen once more lay before the eyes of men, after a burial of about four millenniums! He had been a tall man, of six feet one inch high, and he had fought hard for his life, his face being covered with wounds, and his skull cleft—showing that, as tradition reported, he had died in battle. He was a member of the family of Taa, and was known in life as Taa III., but he was only Hak or "governor" of Thebes—that is, under-king,[1] holding his position, it may be, from Apopi, the head of the Hyksos, himself.

In this glimpse of Egypt under the Hyksos we have apparently the beginning of an account of the great war of liberation, from the Egyptian side. Apopi is still all powerful, and sends a messenger to the sub-king of the native race in the south of Egypt, dictating to him as a master to

[1] It is curious to notice that when the messengers of the Hyksos king came to Ra-Sekenen at Thebes, we read in the papyrus that the prince said to them: "Who sent thee here, to the city of the south? How hast thou come to spy out?" It is just what Joseph said to his brethren: "Whence come ye? Ye are spies, and ye are come here to see where the land is open."

a dependent; but the chief men round him resent such humiliation, and a flame of national enthusiasm is thus kindled, which ended in expelling the Hyksos from the valley of the Nile. All the Egyptian under-kings seem, after a time, to have taken part in this national uprising, which struggled on with sullen resolution for a hundred and fifty years. In the end "The Shepherds" were driven back at every point from their fortresses in Middle Egypt, and forced to make a stand under the walls of Memphis, which was taken after a fierce and bloody struggle. Expelled from the Delta, they gathered for a final effort to regain the ground they had lost, at their great intrenched camp at Avaris, or Pelusium, on the frontier wall, at the extreme north-east of Egypt, and maintained themselves there for a long time against all the attacks of the Egyptians. Generations, indeed, passed before the siege was successful, but patient determination triumphed in the end, for Aahmes I., a little man—as his mummy shows—of five feet six, but brave and vigorous withal, in the fiftieth year of his reign, when he must have been old, at last stormed the city, and drove the enemy out of Egypt into Syria. The valley of the Nile was thus finally delivered from a foreign yoke, from the Cataracts to the Mediterranean, after a subjugation of at least 500 years.[1]

Strange to say, the narrative of one who took part in the closing scenes of this long struggle, and was present at the storming of Avaris and other Hyksos towns, has come down to us, and shows how unsettled the times of the Hebrew sojourn must have been throughout. Eighty years of oppression followed the birth of Moses, and many others may have preceded it; but before these, successive generations of the Hebrew settlers had seen the storms of war sweeping,

[1] Maspero says "more than 600," p. 176.

now here, now there, over the land. It is quite possible, indeed, that they took sides more or less with the Shepherds, with whom they were connected by race, and perhaps this may have embittered the persecution to which they were subsequently exposed. A vigorous and warlike people, which had shown a leaning towards the hated foreigners, would be peculiarly dreaded by the new native dynasty, and specially obnoxious to it.

The story that has come down to us from this far-off age is that of Aahmes, "the chief of the Egyptian navy," or "Captain-General of Marines," and is written on the walls of his tomb on the east side of the river, above Thebes, in sight of the ancient city of El Kobs. The dead man had had a stirring and adventurous life, and wore no fewer than eight gold chains, the equivalents of our war-medals, put round his neck by the Pharaoh, for his bravery in battle. He was born in the city of Eilethya, and was the son of a naval officer, in whose good ship, *The Calf*, young Aahmes made his first acquaintance with the service, in the reign of Aahmes I.; after whom, very likely, his father's loyalty had had him named. He was still only a lad, too young to be married, and was entered among the cadets. After a time, however, he took a wife, and settled; but the old spirit came on him again, and he was appointed to a post on the ship called *The North*, to take part in the war against the Shepherd Kings. His special duty was complimentary to his birth and prowess, for it was to follow the king, on foot, when he went out in his chariot. The final siege of Avaris came on presently, and Aahmes fought so stoutly at it, before the Pharaoh, that he was promoted to the command of the man-of-war *Crowned in Memphis*. In this ship he saw service on Lake Pazetku, near Avaris, and won his first

golden collar of valour, by killing and cutting off the hand of an enemy in a hand-to-hand fight, mention being made of the fact to the head scribe, who reported it to Pharaoh. After that, a second battle took place in the same neighbourhood, and in it also he fought well and cut off a hand from another enemy, which secured him a second golden collar. Then came fighting at Takem, to the south of Avaris, and he carried off a living man, after a struggle in which he had to swim with his prisoner to a distant part of the shore so as to avoid the road to Avaris. This brought him a third collar, for it also was made known through the head scribe to the king. At the storming of Avaris he was even more fortunate, for he there took a grown-up man and three women, prisoners, and had them given to him as slaves by the Pharaoh. In the sixth year came the siege of the town Sharhana, which could not resist his Holiness the king, after the fall of Avaris. Two women prisoners and one hand of a slain enemy, rewarded his bravery, and these women also were given him as slaves. But now the Shepherds were finally crushed, and Aahmes found himself engaged in a war with the Phœnician population of the sea-coast of Palestine, who were ere long subdued. The eastern frontier was forthwith protected against new invasions by a line of additional fortresses, and piping times of peace might have come, but that King Aahmes proclaimed war against the Nubians in the far south. Thither, however, we will not follow the story, beyond saying that Aahmes won more slaves, and got grants of land for his valour. Under Kings Amenophis I., and Thothmes I., he had as warlike a career, and was at last raised by the latter to the high rank of Admiral of the Fleet, or Captain-General. Fortunately, his last campaigns brought him back to regions more interesting to us, for war broke

out against Syria. There, he was fortunate enough to attract the notice of the king, when he was at the head of his force, by carrying off a chariot of war, with its horses and the men in it, and leading them to him ; valour which was recognized once more by the gift of his eighth collar.[1] Here his interesting story ends.

During the long dominion of the foreigners the temples had fallen into decay, but now that peace was restored, and Egypt once more free, the king, to prove his gratitude, began the work of restoring them in more than their original splendour. The deserted quarries in the Arabian hills were re-opened, and limestone blocks brought from them to rebuild the sanctuaries of Memphis, Thebes, and other cities —a rock tablet in the quarries still showing them on their way ; each dragged on a kind of sledge by six yokes of oxen. But Egyptian temples were too vast to be quickly completed, for the inscription in that of Edfou shows that 180 years 3 months and 14 days elapsed between its foundation and its completion. The work of restoration, therefore, must have been going on as long as the Hebrews were in Egypt.

Before leaving the period of the Shepherd Kings,[2] a curious fact in connection with their exclusive worship of the god Set deserves notice. That god had been honoured from the earliest times in Egypt, having had a temple in Memphis as far back as the Fifth Dynasty, while abundant traces of the reverence paid him occur in the times of the Fourth Dynasty ; that is, eight dynasties before the days of Abraham. But the name Sutekh or Set is the Egyptian word for Baal, and is represented by the same sign ; a strange fact, which supports in the most striking way, from its incidental char-

[1] Brugsch, vol. i. p. 249. Page Renouf, in *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. pp. 7–10.

[2] Hofmann has a long article in the *Studien und Kritiken* (1839, pp. 393–348), to prove that the Hyksos were the Israelites.

acter, the statement of Genesis as to the common origin of the peoples of Egypt and Canaan.[1] "The comparative study of the form of the language of ancient Egypt," says M. de Rougé; "the sacred traditions of a neighbouring people; and the fact that one and the same religion was common from the first to certain peoples of Syria and the Delta, all bring us back toward the primitive kindred of Mizraim and Canaan; a kindred which various traits indicate to us as also existing between these two races and their Arabian, Libyan, and Ethiopic neighbours."[2]

Manetho's pictures of the wild ruin spread by the Hyksos over Egypt on their first arrival—the sacking of temples, burning of cities, and oppression of the people—have been fancied by modern students to be greatly exaggerated. It is at least certain that the Egyptians, including even the priests of the Theban god Amon, were accustomed, in the time of the Hyksos and after their expulsion, to give their children Semitic names, borrowed from the language of the Shepherd hordes, and that they voluntarily offered homage to their god. The native Egyptian princes, who had lost their throne by the invasion, naturally hated them and strove to blacken their memory, but, in the opinion of Brugsch,[3] there are no traces of anything like a permanent and ineradicable abhorrence of them on the part of the nation, beyond the aversion of an exclusive and ceremonially strict race for a people counted "unclean."

The fall of the Shepherds introduced the Eighteenth Dynasty, of which Aahmes, or, as he is sometimes called, Amosis, was the first king. He reigned twenty-five years,

[1] Tomkins, *Life and Times of Abraham*, p. 145. Brugsch, *Egypt*, vol. i. p. 212. *Eine Ægypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 231.

[2] De Rougé, *Six Prem. Dyn.*, p. 9.

[3] Brugsch, vol. i. pp. 255 ff.

and was succeeded by his queen, as regent for their son From her appearing in some cases in the paintings as black, it has been assumed that she was a negress,[1] but as she is represented in others with the usual yellow complexion of Egyptian women, it may be that the black is only introduced in her case, as it frequently is in similar ones, in allusion to her having passed to the dark regions of the grave.[2] Her son, Amenophis I., on his assuming the crown, continued his father's policy of extending the empire. The military spirit, roused by the long war of independence, developed itself, in fact, from the times of Aahmes, into a lust of foreign conquest. Long oppressed, the Egyptians now resolved, in their turn, to oppress. Vast numbers of the "Shepherds," preferring slavery in the valley of the Nile to banishment to the desert or to other lands, had to bear the degradation which they had hitherto imposed on others—to hew the stones of the quarry and to mould the bricks of temples and cities; toils and humiliations which the Hebrews, and other races, had, sooner or later, also to undergo. Outside the empire, expansion was most easy on the north-east; the desert, and perhaps the poverty of the inhabitants, discouraging aggression on the south or west. To make future invasion impossible from Syria and the countries beyond, the Egyptian legions were marched into Palestine, as the high road to Asia. Henceforth, for five hundred years, the national records are little more than a roll of victories and conquests, from the sources of the Blue Nile to those of the Euphrates, over all Syria and Ethiopia. The Hebrew tribes in the Delta became familiar with triumphal processions of generals and princes returning from the various seats of war. One day, the spoils of southern victories

[1] Birch, *Egypt*, etc., p. 81. Maspero, p. 176. [2] Brugsch, vol. i. p. 279.

were seen, in long trains of negro prisoners, giraffes led in halters, chained apes and baboons, tame panthers and leopards. On another, the barbarians of the north, as they were called, were led along in similar triumphs, with strange head-dresses, sometimes of the skins of wild beasts, the edges floating over their shoulders, and their own fair skins set off by painting or strange tattooing. A victory over the Rutenni in Syria, or the taking of some centre of the Syrian trade, on still another day, filled all mouths, or there had been a victory over the Libyans and their allies west of the Delta. The flourish of trumpets, and the rolling of drums in these grand military displays became familiar; and, doubtless, many of the sons of Israel were often among the noisy multitude that rent the air with their acclamations, drowning the measured chants of sacred choirs heading the regiments as they marched. It was a time of rapid fortunes to some, but of great suffering to the people, who had to bear the conscription for the endless wars. Aahmes, the son of a sea-captain, could hope to return a great man, though he began as a humble cadet, but in the hut of the peasant there was mourning over the strong man fallen on a distant field.[1]

The monuments fortunately preserve some details of these years, which further light up the period of the Hebrew sojourn, and help us to know what subjects were talked of in the cabins of the Tribes, while still on the Nile. Aahotep, the queen of Aahmes, they would hear was proclaimed a goddess before her death, as the foundress of the new Eighteenth Dynasty; and her splendour, as we may judge from the ornaments put with her into her mummy case when she passed away, must have flashed on those of

[1] See Maspero, p. 179; also *Uarda*, *passim*.

the outside world who saw her in her public appearance, as something wonderful. Her bracelets of gold, turquoise, lapis-lazuli, cornelian, and costly glass; the rich gold chains she wore; her necklace, a wonder of art and costliness; her diadem, adorned with golden sphinxes, were, they would feel sure, only hints of equal splendour in all the details of her palace life, so immeasurably above that of the toiling multitude of her subjects. Her son, Amenhotep I., for the first time among Egyptian kings, had himself painted on the temples, in a wheeled chariot, drawn by horses.[1] He also built a mighty temple in Thebes, and waged wars in Ethiopia and Libya, but an interval of peace marked the closing years of his reign. Then came his son, Thothmes I., "the child of the god Thoth," the holy scribe of the gods, the first king of Egypt who carried its standards to the distant Euphrates. But he bore them also as far south as four degrees inside the tropic, or fully 700 miles south of the Mediterranean, where his presence is still recorded in rock tablets near Tombos. This far-reaching glory was not without its effects at home. The plunder of Syria and of the south was succeeded by a steady flow of their wealth in the more peaceful channels of commerce. Richly laden ships floated down the Nile from the tropics, bearing cattle and rare animals, panther skins, ebony, costly woods, balsam, sweet-smelling resins, gold, and precious stones, and negroes in vast numbers, prisoners of war, now doomed to slavery. In the mines of Wawa, in Nubia, captives and slaves dug gold-bearing quartz from the rocks of the scorching gullies; and, after crushing it in mills, with deadly toil washed out the particles of gold, under the eyes of Egyptian soldiers. The wretchedly barren Nubian valleys paid the penalty of

[1] Birch, p. 82. The horse itself is first mentioned in the reign of Aahmes.

their mineral riches in the misery of their people.[1] From Ethiopia the tide of war turned, next, against the north. Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria in the widest sense, felt the shock of invasions; to be repeated for five hundred years, as a war of vengeance against these countries, to wipe out the humiliation of Egypt in the times of the Shepherd Kings. Nothing would content Thothmes till he had "washed his heart," that is, cooled his anger, by a victory in Mesopotamia; and this he gained, after advancing triumphantly through Palestine, northwards. Nor are we to think of the Kheti or Hittites, and other tribes of Canaan and Syria whom he conquered, as inglorious foes, for the varied and lavish booty taken by the Egyptians from them, as recorded in the monuments, reveals a high civilization and prosperity. Chariots of war, blazing with gold and silver; splendid coats of mail; weapons of all sorts, finely made; gold, silver, and brazen vases; household furniture of every kind, down to tent-poles and footstools; with countless objects, besides, which only civilization could produce, disclose an amazing development of artistic skill and social refinement in Canaan and Western Asia, centuries before the Hebrew conquest under Joshua. Even their military organization taught Egypt lessons. Chariots of war, with their pairs of horses, thenceforward took a prominent place in the Egyptian order of battle—the horse bearing on the monuments the Semitic name of Sus, and the charioteer the Semitic name of Kasan. The very arrangement and composition of the Egyptian army were more or less moulded after Canaanite and Syrian models.[2]

[1] Brugsch, vol. i. p. 289.

[2] The Hittite empire, as will be shewn more fully hereafter, at one time extended from the Euphrates to the shores of the Grecian Archipelago, at the west extremity of Asia Minor. It was thus, in its day, the greatest power in the world, so far as we know, and it only fell on the capture of its capital Carchemish, now Jerablus, on the Euphrates, by the Assyrians, nearly a thousand years later than the period to which the text, above, refers.

Thothmes died early, after beginning a great temple at Thebes, which his illustrious son, Thothmes III., was to extend and beautify beyond precedent. His favourite wife, Hashop, who was also his sister, had borne him a daughter and two sons; but the elder of these, Thothmes II., was cut off before he had reigned any length of time, though not before he had waged war once more on the peoples of the far south. Meanwhile Hashop, clever and energetic, had a series of royal tombs, which I have visited, and the like of which she intended should never again be seen in Egypt, cut into the rocks near Thebes, at a height reached only by grand flights of steps, rising stage on stage; and there her father, Amenhotep I., and her husband-brother were laid. But, though now a widow, she had no thought of retiring from power. Throwing aside her woman's veil, she appeared in all the splendour of Pharaoh, as a born king, in man's attire, with the crown and insignia of royalty, and seated herself on the throne as sole ruler; putting her brother, Thothmes III., a minor, in virtual restraint. Once supreme, her first act was to efface all traces of her brother-husband from the monuments, replacing them by her own name and that of her father—she taking that of Ma Ka Ra, and affecting the title of king. The magnificent temples already begun were carried on vigorously, but this did not satisfy the bright intelligence of the man-woman. She planned a voyage of discovery to the land of "Punt."[1] A fleet of sea-going vessels was prepared for the long and dangerous venture, which was safely accomplished, down the Red Sea and along the hitherto unknown coast of Africa, as far as Cape Guardafui, at the extreme point where the coast turns directly south.

[1] Punt or Pount seems connected with Puni or Pœni—the red men—the Phœnicians—as originally men of Cush.

Pictures on a temple she built in the hills near Thebes still remain, describing the wonders of the enterprise ; long inscriptions adding curious details. Though gradually fading, you can still see the terraced mountains on which incense trees grew, and the huts of the people, built on piles, a ladder being needed to enter. Cocoa-nut palms lent a friendly shade ; strange birds showed themselves on the branches, and stately herds of cattle reposed around. Rich treasures in stones, plants, and animals rewarded the voyagers, who returned with their ships safely, one of which, especially, is minutely painted on the temple wall, bearing thirty-one incense trees in great tubs, samples of the woods of the country, heaps of incense, ebony, objects in ivory inlaid with gold, from Arabia and elsewhere ; paint for the eyes ; giraffes, leopards, bulls, hunting leopards, dog-headed apes, long-tailed monkeys, greyhounds, leopard skins, gold, copper, and much else, besides a number of the natives of the country with their children. A grand ceremonial attended their return, particulars of which we may be sure circulated through Goshen, as elsewhere. The treasures brought home were meanwhile presented to the god Amon, under whose auspices the voyage had been undertaken. A new festival, moreover, was instituted in his honour, the king-queen showing herself in her richest attire, "a spotted leopard skin with copper clasps on her shoulders, and her limbs perfumed like fresh dew." The holy bark of Amon was carried on the shoulders of priests, amidst music and song, and a long procession of court officials, warriors, great people, and priests approached his temple : the priests bearing offerings ; the warriors peaceful branches ; and the vast multitude shouting for joy.

Hashop's reign was splendid, but, ere long, she had to

allow her brother, the great Thothmes III., to share the royal honours with her, which he did for twelve years.

During his long reign of fifty-four years in all, Thothmes, a man of medium height, his mummy shewing that he was five feet seven, proved the Egyptian Alexander the Great, and, moreover, left behind him a world of monuments, from the grandest temples to distant rock tablets, inscribed with his name and deeds. Egypt, indeed, became the chief power of the world for a time. Its arms were carried to the verge of the then known earth, south, east, and west. Countless riches were laid up in its temples, and commerce flowed into it from all lands. Inscriptions on the grand temple halls of Karnak recorded, as Tacitus informs us, "the tributes imposed on the nations; the weight in silver and gold, the number of weapons and horses, the presents in ivory and sweet scents, given to the temples; how much wheat and things of all kinds each nation had to provide; in truth not less great than at present the power of the Parthian or Roman might imposes."

This great Pharaoh had to toil through more than thirteen campaigns, during twenty years, before he had gained his ends. The tributary nations had not only refused their payments during the reign of Hashop, but had leagued together against Egypt, and needed to be subjugated afresh. Town after town had to be stormed; river after river crossed; country after country traversed. The first efforts were directed against the kings and chiefs of Palestine, and ended in their complete overthrow at a battle on the plain of Esdraelon. The fugitives made for the fortress of Megiddo, which was presently stormed, active resistance being thus finally put down. A rich booty rewarded the victors.[1]

[1] Annals of Thothmes III., *Records of the Past*, vol. ii. p. 45.

Silver, gold, lapis-lazuli, turquoise, and alabaster, jars of wine, flocks for the use of the army, chariots plated with gold, an ark of gold, 924 chariots, suits of brazen armour, 200 suits of armour for the soldiery, 502 bows, 7 poles of the chief's pavilion plated with silver, 1,949 bulls, 22,500 goats, besides gems, gold dishes and vases; a great cup, the work of Syria; other vases for drinking, having great stands; swords, gold and silver in rings, a silver statue with the head of gold; seats of ivory, ebony, and cedar, inlaid with gold; chairs, footstools, large tables of ivory and cedar, inlaid with gold and precious stones; a sceptre inlaid with gold; statues of the Canaanitish king, of ebony inlaid with gold, the heads being of gold; vessels of brass; an infinite quantity of clothing; 280,000 bushels of corn reaped from the plain of Megiddo, and a vast number of prisoners, who henceforth became slaves, are comprised in the long enumeration. Nor was this all. The tribute of the Rutenni, or Syrians, is given as including a king's daughter, adorned with gold—as a wife to Thothmes. It, also, comprised ornaments of silver, gold, and lapis-lazuli, slaves male and female, a hundred gold chariots, a chariot of silver inlaid with pure gold, four chariots covered with plates of gold, six chariots of copper, the chest of agate; 1,200 oxen, 104 pounds' weight of silver dishes and beaten out silver plates, a gold breastplate inlaid at the edge with lapis-lazuli, a brass suit of armour inlaid with gold, and many others of a plainer kind; 823 large jars of incense, 1,718 of wine and honey, much ivory, a vast quantity of the best fire-wood for the army, and a quantity of wheat so great that it could not be measured. Some of these particulars may have already been given, but this fuller list shows still more vividly the remarkably advanced civilization of Palestine

and the neighbouring countries in these early ages.[1] The names of the towns of Aram and Syria taken by the great soldier throw further light on the development of Western Asia at this early time—about sixteen hundred years before Christ—and also on the condition in which the various countries stood towards the government on the Nile. The names of two hundred and eighteen captured towns are given, among which are many still famous in later ages. We learn, for example, that, among others, the following submitted to the conqueror: Beirut, Hamath, and Kadesh on the Orontes, and Damascus, showing that he held the country to the extreme north; Aradus on the sea-coast, Carchemish and Pethor on the Euphrates. He boasts that he subdued the Amorites, or hill-men, of Palestine, and crushed the combined army of the Phœnicians and Hittites, while names of conquests in every part of the land prove that while Israel was in Egypt, Palestine was an Egyptian province, the strong points of which were doubtless held by Egyptian garrisons. Thothmes, it is to be remembered, lived only about two hundred years after the death of Joseph.

The return of Thothmes to Egypt after his Palestine campaigns was a famous event in local history, and must have stirred the Hebrew community hardly less than it did their fellow-countrymen, the native Egyptians. The great triumphal procession at Thebes would probably be rehearsed first in Lower Egypt, which was always regarded as a separate "world," and, if so, many an Israelite would wonder at the sight of the captive princes, their children and their subjects, following the young hero; the numberless horses, oxen, goats, and curious animals; the strange productions

[1] The list is from *Records of the Past*, vol. ii. pp. 45 ff., and Brugsch, vol. i. pp. 327 ff. It is engraved on the walls of part of the Great Temple of Karnak. The reign of Thothmes III. was from about B.C. 1610 to B.C. 1556.

of the conquered lands, in endless variety; the splendour and richness of the treasures of gold and silver vessels and works of art; the precious stones, magnificent robes and furniture; the costly woods; the grand chariots, statues, coats of mail, and much else, which passed before him.

The addition to the Great Temple at Karnak of the famous Hall of Pillars, still standing, was ere long begun, as a royal thank-offering to Amon. Three "feasts of victory," of five days each, at once rewarded the army and honoured

Egyptian War Prisoners.

the god, and the priests were made loyal by the vast offerings presented.

Thothmes III. undertook no fewer than fourteen campaigns against the inhabitants of Western Asia, between the twenty-third and fortieth years of his reign; Palestine and Syria bearing the brunt of most, but one, at least, extending to Mesopotamia; if not, indeed, as Dr. Birch thinks possible, even to India. Of all these, I have seen the exact records inscribed on the walls of the temple at Karnak, with wonderful pictures of the chief incidents, and even of the productions and animals of the different regions conquered. Water-lilies of gigantic size, plants like cactuses, all sorts of trees and shrubs, leaves, flowers, and fruits; oxen and calves; a strange creature with three horns; herons, sparrow-hawks,

geese and doves, are intermingled throughout, in the great battle-pictures, to give an idea of the animals and vegetation of the countries in which triumphs had been won. Nor were paintings and inscriptions the only memorials of the great conqueror. Poets sang his praises and those of the god Amon, who had given him the victory: a custom familiar in Egypt for ages before Moses and the children of Israel sang their hymn in honour of Jehovah, for the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea.[1]

The temples, palaces, colossal statues, obelisks, and public buildings, erected or restored by Thothmes in every part of Egypt, have mostly perished; but the Great Temple at Karnak and some of his colossi still remain, so grand in their decay as to fill the mind with awe. What wonder if his idolatrous contemporaries already worshipped him as a divine being while alive, and transferred to him after his death the still higher honours of a god passed to heaven! The victorious conqueror and ruler of the whole world as then known; "the beautifier of the land;" "the always fortunate;" his name was inscribed on thousands of little images and small stone scarabæi, which were used as rings; and its invocation was held to be a charm against wicked spirits and magicians.

Amenhotep II., the son of Thothmes, was a man of remarkable powers, but his fame is obscured by his father's greatness. He, too, led the Egyptian armies to Mesopotamia, taking Palestine by the way, and also to Nubia in the south; filling the earth with blood as his father had done, and draining his country of its sons. Thothmes IV., the next king, was no less energetic, for his campaigns embraced twenty-two degrees of longitude, from Mesopotamia in the

[1] Birch's *Egypt*, vol. ii. p. 87. Brugsch, vol. i. p. 370.

north, to Ethiopia in the far south. The Great Sphinx—near the Pyramids of Gizeh, at Cairo—a gigantic figure of a lion, at rest, with a human head, is still one of the wonders of the world. When recently cleared for the second time in this century,[1] of the vast depth of sand in which a great part of it had for ages been buried, it was found to stand in a vast amphitheatre, cut in the living rock of this limestone plateau, of which the huge form of the Sphinx was itself originally a part; the rock having been cut away round it, leaving it rising, in the midst of the immense excavation, in all its majesty. Two great flights of stairs lead down from the rock on which the pyramids stand, close by, to the floor from which the wonderful creation springs. Looking up from this open area, the human head towers a hundred feet over you. The space between the paws is thirty-five feet long and ten feet wide, and was in ancient times used as a small temple, with an altar of syenite stone before it. The date of this amazing triumph of labour and genius is immensely remote, going back, apparently, to prehistoric ages, before the advent of Menes, the first king of the First Dynasty; so that we are carried back, as we look at it, to a period before chronology began, and are face to face with the dawn of time.

Till the last clearance, only the head, neck, and a small part of the back were visible above the ever drifting sand; but the size of the head alone spoke of the vast proportions of the whole, for the ear is four and one-half feet, the nose five feet seven inches, the mouth seven feet seven inches long, while the face at its widest part is thirteen feet eight inches across. Unfortunately, the barbarous Mamelukes, destroyed in this century by Mehemet Ali, habitually used

[1] It was cleared in 1817, by Caviglia, Englishmen finding the £450 expended.

the grand face as a target, so that it is now terribly battered; but, even so late as in the Arab period of Egyptian rule, it is described as "very pleasing, and of a graceful and beautiful type; indeed, one might say, it smiles winningly."

This wonderful monument was buried in the remote times of Thothmes IV. almost as completely as it has been in our own day, and was cleared by him in consequence of a dream apparently directing him to do so. The whole incident is curious. Thothmes had been hunting the gazelle, and holding a spear-throwing at targets, for his pleasure, near Memphis. But as noon approached he had let his servants retire for rest, and had himself gone to the temple of Sokar in the necropolis, to bring to the god Hormakhu—that is, the sphinx, worshipped as the "Sun on the Horizon"—and the goddess Ramni, an offering of "the seeds of the flowers on the heights," and to pray to the great mother Isis. The sphinx, close at hand, was held to be the likeness of Kephra or Cheops, the builder of the Great Pyramid, whom the flattery of the multitude worshipped as a god, indeed, as the greatest god of these parts; "to whom all the inhabitants of Memphis, and of all towns in its districts, raise their hands, to pray before his countenance, and to offer rich sacrifices." On one of these days the prince in his wandering had stretched himself in the shade of the great god (the sphinx), when sleep overtook him, and he dreamed, exactly at noon, and it seemed as if the great god spoke to him with his own mouth, as a father speaks to his son, in these words: "Behold me, look at me, thou, my son Thothmes. I am thy father, Hormakhu (the sphinx), Kephra (Cheops), Ra (the sun), Toum (the setting sun). The kingdom shall be given to thee, and thou shalt wear the white crown and the red crown on the throne of

the earth-god Set, the youngest among the gods. The earth shall be thine in its length and in its breadth, as far as the light of the eye of the Lord of All shines. Plenty and riches shall be thine. . . . The sand of the district in which I have my existence, has covered me up. Promise me that thou wilt do what I in my heart wish; then will I acknowledge that thou art my son and my helper."[1] After this, Thothmes awoke, and resolved to obey the dream, which he did forthwith, by clearing away the sand from the sphinx, setting up, when he had done it, a great tablet of granite 14 feet high, in the temple space between the great paws, with an account of his dream in all its details, as I have given it: a memento yet to be seen, for the tablet is still in the position in which the old Egyptian Pharaoh had it placed, so many thousands of years ago. Such a significant dream, told of one of the kings who reigned during the Hebrew sojourn on the Nile, reminds us of those in the story of Joseph.

Thothmes IV. was succeeded by Amenhotep III., a king well-nigh as great as Thothmes III., if we may judge from the number and beauty of the monuments he has left behind him, and from the contemporary records that have survived. Mesopotamia on the north, and the land of the negroes on the south, were the boundaries of his empire. Strong and courageous, in his visits to Mesopotamia he delighted in hunting, and records that he speared with his own hand no fewer than two hundred and ten lions. In war, his greatest deeds were performed in Ethiopia, the California of those ages. Two colossal statues of him, which still rise seventy feet above the sand at Thebes, stood originally in front of a great temple of Amon, which he built, but is now entirely

[1] Brugsch, vol. i. pp. 415–417.

gone. They looked wonderful in the evening light, when I saw them. The sail over the Nile, with its broad, calm stream, green banks, yellow sand islands in the shallows, purple hills behind, and the picturesque accessories of

THE COLOSSI AT THEBES. STATUES OF AMENHOTEP III.

creaking shadoofs raising water for irrigation from the smooth-flowing current, a broken pigeon tower, beside a mud hamlet, and graceful clumps of palms fringing the alluvial wall of the shore, was delightful, and not less so was

the ride for three miles to the statues. They stand about twenty yards apart, and all alone on the great plain, from which they once rose amidst the homes and glories of a crowded population. Originally hewn out of a single piece of gritstone, they have for two thousand years been more or less repaired by great blocks of stone let in to fill up gaps made by time or accident. So long ago as B.C. 70, one of them fell, but, having been raised, was perfected with masonry where necessary, in five layers. An earthquake alone, one would think, could overthrow such gigantic figures. The eastern statue was in antiquity the famous Memnon, from which came a metallic sound when the sun first shone into the hollow of its lap, where there seems to have been a sonorous slab, such as are known to exist, which the heat made for an instant vocal, perhaps by the expansion or vibration of its particles. A few peasants in blue cotton slips, with their little flocks of two or three sheep, or goats, or a camel, or a buffalo—that is, a black, flat-horned ox—were moving past as I stood before the great seated forms, their children playing round, or laying vetches before their four-footed companions, for the sheep and goats at least were playmates for the little ones. Instead of this humble surrounding, there had gathered there, more than three thousand years ago, day by day, the great ones of Egypt, the pomp of priests, the illustrious from all lands, and thousands of lowlier worshippers. It was a dream of Egypt as it once was and as it is to-day.

Besides these huge colossi, Amenophis left temples, rows of sphinxes, and vast rock tombs as his magnificent memorials. Above all, his wise sayings were treasured for ages, and he was, moreover, a great conqueror, carrying his arms far to the south, and ruling north and east to the Euphrates.

After his reign of thirty-five years came his son Amenhotep IV., "the long lived," whose mother, the darling wife of his father, had been neither of royal blood nor even an Egyptian, as has been strikingly shewn with much detail in a series of clay tablets, eighty-one in number, very recently discovered, giving glimpses of both father and son. These documents have, besides, a special interest, since they help us to understand the old Hebrew and Western Asiatic relations to the Pharaohs better than ever before.

On the east bank of the Nile, between Minieh and Assiout, a long row of mounds, now known as Tel-el-Amarna, cover the wreck of an ancient city. It was, during its short glory, the capital of Amenhotep IV., or Khu-n-Aten, "the Splendour of the round Sun," who transferred to this spot the glory of his residence, in consequence of the trouble into which he had brought himself by adopting his mother's religion and discarding that of Egypt. As a "heretic," he had to retire from the hatred and treason of the priests of Thebes, and, having built a new capital, transferred thither his father's archives and his own. Among other things carried to it was, fortunately for us, his own and his father's foreign correspondence, written in the wedge-shaped writing and language of Babylonia, then the court-language of Western Asia, and naturally of Egypt, by which Western Asia was ruled, far and near.

These priceless clay tablets were found in one of those treasure-houses of ancient annals, the tombs of the kings and their officers. In this case it was the grave of a royal scribe of Amenophis, or "Amenhotep" III. and IV., of the Eighteenth Dynasty—kings who reigned in the sixteenth century before Christ, and thus, about 200 years before the Exodus—which had given up its records, and also a

number of seals and papyri of great historical and artistic value.

Not only do these tablets explain the historical crux mentioned above, but they introduce us to the family life of the early kings : they picture to us the splendours of the royal palaces ; they enable us to assist at the betrothal of the kings' daughters, and to follow the kings to their hunting grounds. Most of the tablets are letters addressed to Amenhotep III., among the most interesting of them being some written by Tushratta, King of Mesopotamia. We know from other sources that Amenhotep was a mighty hunter, and that during the first ten years of his reign he killed 102 lions with his own hand in the plains of Mesopotamia. On the occasion of a certain expedition in search of these big game, he, like a king in a fairy tale, met and loved Ti, the daughter of Tushratta, the king of the country. In due time their nuptials were celebrated, and Ti went down into Egypt accompanied by 317 of her principal ladies. The establishment of this goodly array of Semitic beauties in Egypt led to the advent of a host of their countrymen, who, finding that the land offered a favourable sphere for their inherent business capacities, settled down in large numbers, and gradually, like the Jews in Russia at the present day, acquired possession of the lands and goods of their hosts. The fact of the preservation of this library of cuneiform tablets testifies to the influence exercised by the queen, of which we also find mention elsewhere. Under her protection her countrymen doubtless enjoyed exceptional privileges, and during the reigns of the succeeding feeble sovereigns they were probably able to hold their own. But with the advent to power of the Nineteenth Dynasty, about B.C. 1462, a change came over their fortunes. They were set to the un-

congenial tasks of making bricks and of building walls and pyramids; and finally the oppression they endured ended in the outbreak which led to their triumphing gloriously over their taskmasters at the passage of the Red Sea.

Among the letters translated, the most interesting is one from Tushratta, addressed to "the great king, the King of Egypt, my brother, my son-in-law, who loves me and whom I love," and begins, "I, Tushratta, the great king, thy father-in-law, who loves thee, the King of Mîdtanni, my brother, have peace; to thee may there be peace, and to thy house and to my sister (*i.e.*, the wife of Amenhotep III.), and to the ladies of thy establishment, to thy sons, to thy chariots, to thy horses, to the generals of thy forces, to thy country, and to thyself may peace be greatly multiplied." After a multitude of such complimentary phrases, he proposes to his son-in-law that they should continue the arrangement made by their fathers for pasturing double-humped camels, and in this way he leads up to the main purport of his epistle. He says that Manie, his great-nephew, is ambitious to marry the daughter of the King of Egypt, and he pleads the young man's cause with a prayer that Manie might be allowed to go down to Egypt to woo in person. The alliance would, he considers, be a bond of union between the two countries, and, he adds, as though by an after-thought, that the gold which Amenhotep appears to have asked for should be sent at once, together with "large gold jars, large gold plates, and other articles made of gold." After this interpolation he returns to the marriage question, and proposes to act in the matter of the dowry, in the same way in which his grandfather acted, presumably on a like occasion. He then enlarges on the wealth of his kingdom, where "gold is like dust which cannot be

counted," and he adds that he sends as presents of peace to the king by the hand of his grandson Giliya, "a gold vessel inlaid (?) with lapis-lazuli, 20 pieces of lapis-lazuli, 19 inlaid gold objects of finely chased gold, 42 objects made of some kind of precious stone, 40 gold objects inlaid with the same sort of precious stone, harness for horses, chariots, carved wooden fittings, and 30 eunuchs."

Another letter is from Burraburiyash, son of Kuri-Galzu, King of Karaduniyash, the traditional Garden of Eden, to King Amenhotep IV., in which the writer acknowledges the receipt of two manas of gold, but adds that two more are absolutely necessary for the ornamentation of the house of his god and of his own palace. He promises to send in return anything that Amenhotep may wish to have from Babylonia, and in the mean time he begs him to accept "three manas of lapis-lazuli, ten sets of harness for horses, five chariots, and various woods."

A third letter is from the King of Alashiya to Amenhotep III., and is interesting as showing the international relations existing between the two countries, and the kindly offices which were exchanged between the kings. The writer mentions that a native of Alashiya had gone down to Egypt and died there, having left his wife and family in his native land. As he died possessed of property, the king requests Amenhotep to send back his goods by his ambassador. The writer also begs Amenhotep to accept "five vessels of bronze, the like of which are not made in the land of Egypt," together with a bull which the king had asked for, and promises that the trees Amenhotep had expressed a wish to have should be sent him. In return for all these gifts he asks for only "two kukupu jars, and a man who understands eagles." Let us hope that he got them, and

that they afforded him some solace under the affliction of the blighting hand of the god Bazbar (the plague ?), which was slaying the people of his land.

The tablets of the reign of Amenhotep IV., like those to his father, were written by the kings and governors of Babylonia and Assyria, Mesopotamia, Eastern Cappadocia, Syria, and Palestine, which was then a dependency of Egypt, with Egyptian garrisons and Egyptian governors in its more important towns. In other parts of Palestine, however, the native "princes" were allowed to hold their petty dominions, which often consisted of little more than single towns, with a few villages and fields round them. It is curious to read despatches about the political movements in places like Gath, Gaza, or Keilah, mentioned in Scripture; but the chief interest of the tablets to general readers lies in the romantic story of the marriage of Amenhotep IV. to the Syrian princess, and its strange results in the fortunes of her son.

Her name, it seems, was Ti, and she came from Aram Naharaim, that is, Syria of the Two Rivers, or Northern Mesopotamia. It was on the east of the Euphrates, though it sometimes gained land on the west of that river also. Its ruler was the nearest Syrian prince independent of Egypt, for those as far as the western bank of the great stream were his vassals.

Ti brought to her Egyptian home Semitic manners, followers, and religion; and her arrival filled the court with officials who had come to her, or with her, from Asia, and of course bore names foreign to the Nile. Like the queen, they worshipped Baal, the Sun-god, using as his symbol the figure of the Solar disk, with wings for its rays, as we see in the early monuments of Western Asia. Amenhotep IV. was,

naturally, brought up in his mother's creed, which was also that of so many magnates and others around him in the palace. When his father died he married another Syrian princess from his mother's country, and introduced still more numerously than his father had done Canaanites and Phœnicians to the high offices of state. After a time he even went the length of publicly adopting the Syrian religion, slighting the worship of Amon, the great god of Thebes, and of the other Egyptian gods. Hence, though he built temples to them, he worshipped only the "One God of Light"—the sun—in honour of whom he even changed his name, as I have said, to Khu-n-Aten—"the Splendour of the round Sun." He further erased the name of Amon and of his divine wife Muth from the monuments, and proclaimed himself "a high-priest of Hormakhu," and a "friend of the round Sun." Nor was this all. He sought to get the new faith adopted by Egypt instead of the faith of his race, but the cry of "The Church in danger!" rose from the priests of the dishonoured god, and led to a rebellion, on account of which Amenhotep removed his capital from Thebes to Middle Egypt, that is, farther north. There a new city, Khu-n-Aten, the city of Aten, the sun, was forthwith built, with a grand temple to the Sun-god Aten, in a foreign style, and palaces and public buildings, nearly all of granite, laboriously brought from Assouan or Syene. In this new metropolis he gathered round him a court of foreigners from Western Asia, Semitic in blood, as Edward the Confessor filled his court with his beloved Frenchmen. The Egyptians in attendance on him in court offices were only such as had gone over to his new creed, and hence the hatred of the priesthood grew still more intense against him. But the new city rose apace, with a grand temple to the Solar disk,

and a great palace; represented now, with all else in the once busy capital, by the silent mounds of earth at Tel-el-Amarna.

Though soft and feminine in his features, and of a weak, unmanly figure, Amenhotep was far from being either weak or irresolute in character. Before leaving Thebes, he had compelled the dignitaries of the empire to unite with labourers and masons in building a huge pyramid of sandstone in honour of the "God of Light;" the noblest lords, including even the specially illustrious "fan-bearers," being required to play the humble part of overseers of the workmen who cut, shipped, and put together the stone. But he was as tender and faithful in his domestic relations as he was proud and stern towards his opponents, and clung zealously to his new faith; which, indeed, was much purer and loftier than the creed he had discarded. His rupture with the priests must have been the great topic of the times in Goshen and over all the land, but it did not shake his throne, for he died in peace—leaving seven daughters but no son—after a reign not without glory from the deeds of his armies abroad, and famous for his honest worth at home.

The husband of the third daughter of this king succeeded him on his throne, and has had his memory preserved by a remarkable painting in the tomb of a Theban contemporary. It shows us the king on his throne receiving the homage and tribute of the nations subject to him. Richly laden ships bring the gifts and dues of the negro populations, and with them appears a negro queen, who has come on a chariot drawn by oxen, surrounded by her slaves and officials, to visit the Pharaoh and lay rich presents at his feet, as the Queen of Sheba in a later age came to Solomon.

The brown-skinned kings of Palestine are also painted in rich dresses, their black hair elaborately curled ; offering to Pharaoh Syrian horses, led by red-bearded men of low stature ; costly and beautiful works of their country, in silver, gold, blue stone and green stone ; and all kinds of jewels ; as an expression of their wish for peace, and of their respect. But Tut-ank-Amon, as the king called himself, was only an illegitimate pretender, for his queen, through her mother, was not of the pure blood of the Pharaohs ; so that, although he returned to the old faith, and thus gained the outward support of the priests, he failed to secure their warm loyalty. Hence, when he died, after a short reign, without a legitimate successor, the throne was seized by Khu-n-Aten's former Master of the Horse—"the Holy Father Ai"—who seems to have made a remarkably good king. Gossip about him must have been rife from the Mediterranean to Nubia—how his wife had been nurse to King Khu-n-Aten, the heretic ; how this had raised Ai, already a lord of the court and a "holy father" of the highest grade, to even higher dignities ; how he had been successively "fan-bearer on the right hand of the king, and superintendent of the whole stud of Pharaoh," and "the royal scribe of justice." Nor had his wife fared less generously, for rumour would justly recount how "the high nurse, the nourishing mother of the godlike one, the dresser of the king," increased in riches and honour, year by year. Wisely orthodox, Ai had the support of the priests, and was allowed by them to prepare a tomb for himself amongst those of the kings at Thebes. As the Pharaoh, his armies preserved the wide limits of the empire, and even won great victories, but he had no heirs, and the succession to the throne was once more a difficulty at his death. Another

Pharaoh had to be discovered, and the good fortune fell in this case on a person who had no connection with royalty except his having married a sister of the queen of Amenhotep III. His name, however, helped him, for it was Horemhib, or Horus, one of the great gods. An inscription records the strange steps of his elevation. In his youth he had the happiness of being presented to the Pharaoh, who named him "guardian of the kingdom." "In all his deeds and ways," he tells us, "he followed in the path of the gods Thoth and Ptah, justice and truth, and they were his shield and his protection on earth, to all eternity." He was afterwards raised to the great dignity of the Adōn of the land, and held the office for many years. This was the position granted to Joseph, and hence the honours paid the son of Jacob may be gathered from those shown to Horemhib in the same office. "The great men at the court bowed before him, and the kings of foreign nations of the south and north came before him, and stretched out their hands at his approach, and praised his soul, as if he had been a god. His authority was greater than that of the king in the sight of mortals, and all wished him prosperity and health."

His adoption as the crown prince of the land followed, and, next, his selection for the throne, after the death of "The Holy Father." An inscription detailing the incidents of his coronation throws light on the relations of the priesthood to the Pharaohs and their immense influence in Egypt. "The noble god Amon (that is, his priests, the most powerful corporation in the land) gave command to conduct the god Horus (the intended king) to Thebes . . . to deliver him his royal office and to establish it for the term of his life." Then came a grand coronation procession, and "Amon Ra was moved with joy." The daugh-

ter of the late king was forthwith given to him as queen. . . . Then went Amon (that is, his image was carried by the priests) with his son (the new king) before him, to the hall of kings, to set his double crown on his head. There the gods (that is, the choirs of their priests) cried out: 'We will to invest him with his kingdom; we will to bestow on him the royal attire of the Sun-god Ra; we will to praise Amon in him. . . .' And the great name of this god-like one was settled and his title recorded."[1]

"After this festival in the southern country was finished, Amon, the king of the gods (that is, the priests bearing the image of Amon with them), went in peace to Thebes, and the king went down the river in his ship, like an image of the god Hormakhu. Thus he had taken possession of the land, as was the custom. He renewed the dwellings of the gods (the temples).[2] He had all their images re-sculptured, each as it had been before. He set them up in their temple, and he had one hundred images made, one for each of them, of like form, and of all kinds of costly stones. He visited the cities of the gods, which lay as heaps of rubbish in the land, and had them restored. . . . He took care of their daily festival of sacrifice, and of all the vessels of the temples, of gold and silver. He provided the temples with holy persons and singers, and with the best of the body-guards, and he presented to them arable land and cattle, and supplied them with all kinds of provision which they required, to sing thus, each morning, to the Sun-god Ra: 'Thou hast made the kingdom great for us in thy son, who is the consolation of thy soul, King Horemhib. . . .'" The great pyramid raised by the heretic King Khu-n-Aten was soon

[1] Hymns in which the Pharaoh was adored as the sun-god are still extant.

[2] *Pap. Anastasi*, II. v. 6.

after destroyed, its stones being taken to raise an addition to the temple of Amon, and thus the triumph of the priests was at last complete.[1] When the last king of the Apostate House had thus died or been dethroned, the new city was forsaken for ever, with all its magnificence of temple and palace, and the new kings returned to the worship of Amon of Thebes, and Ptah of Memphis, and guarded against the dangers of Khu-n-Aten's times by expelling the Semitic foreigners from the land, except in so far as it was thought well to retain some proportion, including the Hebrews, to serve as public or private slaves.

With Horemhib expired the Eighteenth Dynasty. The Nineteenth was that under which the oppression of the Hebrews and their deliverance took place, but both were still some generations distant.

[1] Brugsch, vol. i. pp. 462–473.

CHAPTER III.

THE OPPRESSION IN EGYPT.

Of the history of the Jews in Egypt we know nothing directly except in its last period, and even of that we have only a few brief and fragmentary notices. They evidently, however, by degrees laid aside, to a large extent, their tent life as wandering shepherds, and applied themselves in some cases to agriculture; digging canals from the east branch of the Nile to water their fields: in others to the various trades and arts of Egypt; and thus passed from a lower to a higher state of social development. Reuben, Manasseh, and Gad, indeed, alone clung to the old shepherd life after the Exodus.

No country in these early ages was so far advanced in civilization as Egypt; none could boast so grand a history; such far-reaching power; such splendour of architecture; such knowledge of arts and sciences; such royal magnificence in its government, or such accumulated wealth in its national treasury and in the hands of its nobles and priests. To use the words of Ewald, Egypt—like Athens and Rome in later ages, in their relations to the northern races—was a magnet which attracted or drove from it the less cultured peoples round—a school for wandering, conquering, or conquered nationalities, from which none went away as they had come.[1] A community settled in it, as the Hebrews, when they left it, had been, for over four hundred years, must

[1] Quoted in Uhlemann's *Israeliten und Hykscs*, p. 2.

have insensibly caught more or less the modes of thought and special ideas predominant on all sides round them. Above all, they must have been largely influenced by the strange religion prevailing. Lofty and philosophical in theory or in the secret interpretation of the initiated; splendid in its ritual and temples, and universally honoured in the land; it had doubtless much to attract. Traces of the great primeval revelation of the One living and only God still survived,[1] though veiled and confused by the polytheism which had sprung up. Thus in a hymn to the god Amon,[2] we find the lines:—

> "One only art Thou, Thou Creator of beings,
> And Thou only makest all that is created.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> He is One only, Alone, without equal,
> Dwelling alone in the holiest of holies."

A few among the higher priests doubtless whispered, as a mystery trusted only to themselves, the existence of this One only God, self existent, "His own Father and Son," "the To-day, Yesterday, and To-morrow," the "I Am that I am;"[3] but these glimpses of the august truth were so thickly veiled and shaded by the countless and varied forms of the Egyptian pantheon, as to elude the recognition or comprehension of the multitude. In this very hymn indeed, Amon is said to be begotten by Ptah, the local god of Memphis. But to breathe even this confused vision of the truth beyond the small circle of the instructed few was an impiety,

[1] *Durch Gosen*, p. 528. *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 45.

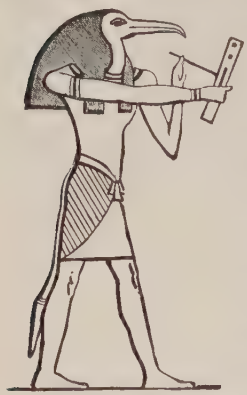
[2] *Bulaq Papyri*, p. 17. Translated by Goodwin, *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. ii. p. 250. *Records of the Past*, vol. ii. p. 129. It has been translated also by Grebaut and Stern. See, also, *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 45.

[3] See this name—afterwards rightly assumed by Jehovah as due only to Him—quoted from the hieroglyphics, in Ebers' *Durch Gosen*, p. 528.

to be severely punished.[1] To the world at large in the Nile valley, there were seven gods of the highest rank—Ra, the Sun-god, the great national divinity, and Osiris and his family. From these had emanated a second grade of twelve gods, at whose head stood the moon-god Thoth, and from these again, a third, of thirty demi-gods.[2] But all these divinities took so many names and forms of both sexes, that the mind could not retain more than a few. Nor was this the worst. From the earliest ages, it had been the strange custom in Egypt to regard certain beasts, birds, fishes, and even insects as the symbols of particular gods.[3] The crocodile, the goat, the sheep, the scarabæus beetle, the ox, the dog, the dog-faced ape, the shrew-mouse, the cat, the wolf, the ichneumon, the lion, the hippopotamus, the ibis, some serpents, the sparrow-hawk, some fishes, and some vegetables, were sacred in wider or narrower districts, and although perhaps regarded by the educated or reflecting few as only symbols, were worshipped by the multitude as in some way divine. Offerings were presented to the sacred animals; priesthoods maintained in their honour; magnificent temples built for their reception; grand festivals held in their praise, and public lamentations made at their death; whilst to kill one of them was a capital crime. They were regarded as incarnations in which the particular god had veiled himself, to watch the better, from this disguise, the lives of his worshippers and the current of events. Clement of Alexandria aptly expresses the feeling of the outside world towards this strange religion. "The holy places of the temples," says he, "are hidden by great veils of cloth of gold. If you advance towards the interior of the building to see the statue

[1] *Varda*, vol. i. p. 46. [2] Lepsius, *Ægypten*, Herzog, vol. i. p. 142.
[3] J. E. Müller, in Herzog, vol. xvi. p. 49.

of the god, a priest comes to you with a grave air, chanting a hymn in the Egyptian language, and lifts a corner of the gorgeous curtain to show you the divinity. But what do you see? A cat, a crocodile, a serpent, or some other dangerous animal. The god of the Egyptians appears; it is a beast tumbling about on a carpet of purple." The multitude, ever incapable of refined distinctions between the idol or symbol and the god who had veiled himself in its outward form, paid divine honours directly to the sacred bird or beast. Nothing more degrading than such a monstrous faith could be conceived. Thus, the people of Thebes worshipped the crocodile, which was killed as hateful farther up the Nile. A fine specimen having been caught, the priests taught it to eat from their hands, and carefully tended it. Golden ear-rings were hung in its ears and bracelets set on its forefeet.[1] Strabo gives an account of a visit to one. "Our host," says he, "took cakes, broiled fish, and a drink prepared with honey, and then went towards the lake[2] with us. The brute lay on the bank, whither the priests went to it. Two of them then opened its jaws, and a third put into its mouth, first the cakes, then the fish, and finally they poured the drink down its throat. After this, the crocodile shambled into the water and swam to the bank on the other side. Another stranger having arrived with a similar offering, the priests took it, made the circuit of the



THE GOD THOTH. THE SCRIBE OF THE GODS.

[1] Herod., ii. 69.

[2] The sacred lake in the temple grounds, made for the divine crocodile.

lake, and, having reached the crocodile, gave it to him in the same way."[1] It was not uncommon for rich people to spend immense sums on a splendid funeral of a sacred cat,[2] dog, or ram;[3] and so zealous were the multitude in their worship, that even so late as a century and a half before Christ, a Roman living in Alexandria, having by accident killed a cat, was seized by the crowd, on the fact being known, and put to death on the spot, though he was a Roman citizen, and though the king, who dreaded Rome and trembled for his crown, implored them to spare the unfortunate man's life.[4]

SEVEK-RA.

Some of these beast-gods were only locally famous; others were honoured by the whole country. The ram was honoured at Thebes, where the great god Amon had a ram's head. At Mendes, in the heart of the Hebrew district, the goat was sacred to the god Binebtat, who was represented with a goat's head and legs. His worship, in keeping with his symbol, was wildly fanatical, and hateful for its orgies of lust and impurity.[5] At Kynopolis, the dog; at Lycopolis, the wolf, and perhaps

[1] *Strabo*, xvii. 1.

[2] *Eine Ægypt. Königst.*, vol. ii. pp. 51, 212.

[3] Diodorus, i. 84.

[4] *Ibid.*, i. 83. See, also, another case, *Hours with the Bible*, vol. i. p. 13.

[5] The Hebrews seem to have been drawn away by this idol and to have sacrificed to him. Lev. xvii. 7. Deut. xxxii. 17. In these texts the word "devils" is to be translated "goats."

the jackal; at Bubastis, the cat; at Tochompso, the crocodile was worshipped. Every household, moreover, had its sacred bird, which it fed during its life and buried with the family after its death, when it had been carefully embalmed.[1] The goddess Pecht had the head of a cat, Hathor that of a cow, and Osiris was worshipped under an obscene symbol.

The goat of Mendes was "the soul of Osiris;" the calf Mnevis of On, "the soul of Ra," the great Sun-god. The phœnix, a fabulous bird, was an incarnation of Osiris, as the ibis was of Thoth, and the sparrow-hawk of Horus. But the ox Apis, at Memphis, not far from Goshen, was the supreme expression of the divinity in an animal form. He was regarded as an incarnation of Osiris and Ptah together, and hence was honoured as, at once, "the second life of Ptah," and "the soul of Osiris."[2] He had no father, but a ray of light quickened him in the womb of his cow mother which henceforth could bear no other calf.[3] It was required that he be black, with a triangular white spot on his forehead; the figure of a vulture or eagle with outspread wings on his back, and that of a scarabæus on his tongue. Such marks, it need hardly be said, never appeared, but the priests had symbols which they accepted in their stead, as astronomers fancifully recognize the outline of a dragon, a bear, or a lyre in the positions of the stars of different constellations.[4] He was not allowed, however, to live more than twenty-five years. At the end of this period he was drowned in the sacred fountain of the Sun, and his embalmed body was then laid with great public solemnities in a magnificent tomb.[5]

[1] Creuzer's *Symbolik*, p. 158. [2] Strabo, xvii. 1.
[3] Herod., iii. 28.
[4] Mariette, *Bulletin Arch. de l'Athénæum*, 1855, p. 54. [5] Page 19.

With all this degradation, however, the Egyptian religion had the glory of maintaining the immortality of the soul as one of its most cherished doctrines, and with this the resurrection of the body; though they linked the continued existence of the spirit to that of the frail tenement in which it had lived on earth.[1]

THE GOD AMON.

In the midst of such an idolatry the Hebrews could for themselves see its results. Cherishing for generations the lofty faith of Abraham, they must have kept very much apart while the pure creed of the patriarchs still held its ancient place in their hearts. They saw the race which honoured beast-gods sunk into degradation, and treated as slaves by their kings and the higher castes. There was no reverence for man as man, no recognition of the personal freedom of the population at large. The Pharaohs boasted of descent from the gods, and were worshipped even during their life as divine, and the whole land and all the people in it belonged to them. If a portion of the soil were left to the peasant it was an act of grace. There was, in fact, no "people" in Egypt; only slaves. They were forced to toil, at the royal will, in raising temples, pyramids, and cities, under the eyes of remorseless "drivers." Nor was any sympathy for the suffering multi-

[1] The best account I know of Egyptian ideas of immortality is in Maspero's *Egyptian Archæology*. London, 1889.

tude shown by the priests, who steadily ranged themselves on the side of power. Thus, sunk in political degradation, the multitude sought compensation in immorality. Gentle and patient as they were, the Egyptians were also specially impure. With such a worship, they gave the reins to the baser passions, for why should a man be better than his gods? Unnatural vices prevailed on every side.[1] Universal and open impurity marked their great yearly religious festivities at Bubastis and Dendera,[2] at which 700,000 people sometimes were assembled.

ANUBIS.

It would have been astonishing if, amidst such corruption, the Hebrews had remained uncontaminated. Yet the wonder is they were not worse than they proved. Their independence and separate nationality, long respected, doubtless shielded them in part, yet they had, as a people, lapsed into a very low spiritual condition when Moses appeared. The name of the God of their fathers had been forgotten,[3] and they had defiled themselves with the idols of Egypt,[4] and worshipped a calf, perhaps the symbol of the god Mnevis, under the very shadow of Sinai. They would appear also, as already said, to have sacrificed to the sacred goat Mendes,[5] which was so much honoured in Egypt that the whole land mourned its death. Indeed, after the con-

[1] Herod., ii. 46. Lev. xviii. 3 ff. "After the doings of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt shall ye not do." See, especially, ver. 23. Comp. with Herod., ii. 60.

[2] Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, p. 483.

[3] Exod. iii. 13.

[4] Ezek. xx. 7, 8.

[5] Page 81, n.

quest of Canaan they still clung to the worship of Egyptian gods.[1] Nor was idolatry the only evil learned by their long sojourn on the Nile. Ezekiel, so late as the time of the Captivity, reminds them how even their maidens had yielded to the impurities of Egypt, and had given themselves up to shameless sin.[2]

But if, on the one hand, the Hebrews were thus contaminated by the religion and morals of the Nile valley, on the other hand, they gained much in their social and national development by residence there. Surrounded by the highest existing culture, they gradually became fitted for independent national life. The sciences, arts, and mode of life of their neighbours re-appear more or less in their future history; in the medical knowledge of Israel, its civilization, its laws and customs, and even its knowledge of writing. Arithmetic, geometry, and acquaintance with the heavens were unknown to them before entering Egypt; and arts, of which no trace exists in the patriarchal times, appear among them immediately after the Exodus. We find them then executing delicate work in gold, silver, wood, and stone; skilled in weaving, embroidering, and dyeing,[3] and able to cut, set, and engrave precious stones.[4]

Nothing is told us of their history in Egypt, but an allusion in Chronicles[5] may refer to an unsuccessful attempt to break away from the Nile before the days of Moses. Their families grew into twelve, thirteen, or fourteen tribes,[6] and

[1] Josh. xxiv. 23. [2] Ezek. xxiii. 8.

[3] Graetz, *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 14. Uhlemann, *Die Israeliten*, p. 3.

[4] Proved by the Urim and Thummim, the stones on the high-priest's shoulders, and on his breastplate, etc. These were engraved with the names of the tribes. But the mention of a signet ring (Gen. xxxviii. 18) may imply the knowledge of stone engraving at an earlier period.

[5] 1 Chron. vii. 21.

[6] The number of the tribes is usually given as twelve, Ephraim and Manasseh being reckoned as two, and Levi not counted. Manasseh, however, broke up into two,

these maintained a steadfast relationship through common descent and traditions. To the Reubenites, as descendants of Jacob's eldest son, the leadership would, under ordinary circumstances, have been assigned, but the patriarch, in his dying words, virtually deposed their forefather from the rights of the first-born. "Bubbling over like water," in his unbridled passions, he had "defiled his father's couch," and "would have no preëminence" such as his birthright promised.[1] The Reubenites, as has been noticed already, were and remained nomadic shepherds, as also did the Gadites and the eastern half-tribe of Manasseh, with whom similarity of life united them; but even among these Reuben took no foremost place. In the same way, the next eldest tribe, Simeon, remained always subordinate, and ended by being virtually lost in that of Judah. Over them, also, for their lawless conduct at Shechem, their father's words hung like a blight, for "their swords had been instruments of violence."[2] "O my soul," the dying patriarch had added, of both Simeon and Levi, in this connection, "come not thou into their council; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united; for in their anger they slew men, and in their self-will they houghed oxen."[3] Both, as he predicted, were, literally, "divided in Jacob and scattered in Israel." Judah, although in later times the most powerful and noted of all the tribes, was long in taking the leadership, which in Egypt and for ages afterwards, was naturally held by that of Joseph: including from the first its two great branches—Ephraim, long supreme as

that on the east and that on the west of the Jordan, and hence there were thirteen tribes, or, with Levi, fourteen. Graetz thinks the number of offerings in Numbers xxix. 13—thirteen—refers to thirteen tribes (*Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 11), but if so, the fourteen offerings that follow would include Levi, and make fourteen tribes.

[1] Gesenius, *Thes.*, 1098 *b*, 645 *a*. Mühlau und Volck, under the word Yathar.

[2] Gesenius, *Thes.*, 672 *b*.

[3] Lit. translation, Gen. xlix. 6.

the representative of its great forefather, and spoken of as "Israel;" and Manasseh, which separated into the eastern and western branches of Machir and Gilead. The other tribes were always subordinate: Benjamin, Issachar, and Zebulon connecting themselves in a measure with the descendants of Joseph; Dan, Asher, and Naphtali choosing a more isolated life, comparatively apart from their brethren. The tribe of Levi held a peculiar position. Assuming the moral leadership in Egypt, it afterwards rose to be the priestly and ecclesiastical head of the nation.

The tribal constitution of these various clans, in Egypt, was simple. They had no common chief, but lived under the rule of their own elders or sheiks. This simple patriarchal form of government they retained in common with their related nations, the tribes of Edom and those descended from Ishmael,[1] and with the Horites—or Cave-men—who lived among the Edomites, and were of Canaanitish descent.[2] As the Edomites had Allufim, or "heads," the dukes of our version, the tribes of Israel had chiefs, known as princes, even before the time of Moses, for there is no mention of their having been introduced by the great lawgiver. Under these "princes" or "elders," were subordinate chiefs of greater and lesser divisions; each tribe being apparently divided into twelve "Families," or clans, and each clan into twelve "Houses of the Fathers."[3] All these chiefs, no doubt, ranked among the "elders" of the nation; but it is impossible to tell whether this name, the Hebrew Zakēn, an elder—like the Arab Sheik, the Roman Senator, the Saxon Ælderman, or the modern Signior, which mean the same, was simply a title of rank, without reference to

[1] Gen. xxv. 16; xxxvi. 10, 11.
[2] Gen. xxxvi. 29, 30.
[3] Num. i. 2. Josh. vii. 14, 17.

age, or is to be literally understood. Nor is there any hint of the mode by which the heads or elders were elected in cases of vacancy in their number.[1]

Thus we have to think of Israel in Egypt not as a mere mob or multitude, but as a nation, or at least an organized community, of which the unit was the family, ruled by the father, with very extensive power. Separate households, moreover, grouped together into a minor clan, made a "House of the Fathers," and a number of these, springing from a common ancestor, formed a "family," or what the Romans would have called a "gens," over which, as a greater house, was also set a "father," or "head," or "prince." The different tribes, however, showed very different characteristics. Reuben, Gad, and Simeon, as has been noticed, clung to a pastoral life, while Benjamin was famous for its warlike skill and spirit. Military unions, known as "thousands," were common to all; meaning, it may be, 1,000 soldiers from each, or bands selected from 1,000 households.[2] From the earliest times, also, the manhood of Israel were accustomed to act together; consulting and determining, with a noble freedom, on their common interests. Every district and division of the whole people took part in these assemblies, by representation or otherwise, and nothing was binding on them which had not been voted at such a general parliament. Thus a healthy spirit of freedom, and a patriarchal government, obtained from the first; each "head" or "elder," in his lesser or greater sphere, representing its members in the gathering of the tribes, at

[1] Michaelis, *Mosäisches Recht*, vol. i. p. 263. Ewald, *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 519. Ewald, *Alterthümer*, pp. 321 ff.

[2] Ewald thinks the number of higher and lower elders (including princes) was 1,728; *i.e.*, 12 princes, 12 heads of families of each tribe, and 12 heads of "houses" (in the collective sense) of each family.

which, in later times, over 400,000 men, fit for war, in some cases, met.[1] There was, moreover, under Moses, and apparently in all after ages, a senate or council of elders, numbering seventy or seventy-two, on whom lay a special responsibility as the advisers of the nation.

But notwithstanding differences so radical between the free internal organization of the Hebrews and the slavery of the Egyptian people, the stay of over 400 years on the Nile must have left many results of which the traces are lost. Some, however, which are still known, and have already been named, deserve more detailed mention. Of these the knowledge and use of writing must rank among the chief. It is not mentioned in connection with the patriarchs; but Moses, after the Exodus, writes the commandments on two tables of stone, as he had seen done so often in Egypt; and directions to write separate laws in a book are of frequent occurrence. Egyptian words, also, were incorporated with the Hebrew. The Jewish measures are called by Egyptian names—the log, the ephah, the hin, and the bath.[2] The local name for the Nile, *Jeor*, meaning at once a ditch, a canal, or a river, and used especially of the Nile, is transferred to the Bible text. So also the word Achu—the papyrus reed-beds—is the Egyptian word used in Genesis for the green edge of the Nile, from which the cattle in Pharaoh's dream ascended to the shore.[3] Gomeh—the word used for the material of the ark in which Moses floated—is pure Egyptian for the papyrus. The month Adar bears the name of the Egyptian Athyr, and the Nablium, or ten-stringed harp, is common to both languages. Sus, the Hebrew word for horse, was adopted in Egypt. Adōn, the name for the "Ark" of the Covenant, and Tābah, that of the "ark" in which Moses

[1] Judg. xx. 2. [2] Graetz, vol. i. p. 369. Uhlemann, p. 52. [3] Gen. xli. 18.

was preserved, are also both Egyptian. Still more curious, it appears certain that the word Ōn—the cry of mourning for the dead—was only the perpetuation in Hebrew of the lament for "Ōn," the winter retiring sun, raised yearly, to commemorate the death of Osiris, when thousands of Egyptian men and women beat their breasts as they walked in sad procession, uttering loud cries of grief.[1] The hierarchy of the Levites reminds us of the constitution of the Egyptian priesthood; the divisions of the Tabernacle and of the Temple were similar to those of the Egyptian temples.[2]

How long the Hebrews enjoyed peace and independence after the death of Joseph is only conjecture. It is very probable that a great king like Thothmes III., who needed such multitudes of labourers and workmen for his vast constructions, pressed into his service, not only Egyptians and prisoners of war, but Asiatic races like the Hebrews, living on the Delta.

But it was left to Rameses II., the Sesostris of the Greeks —his Egyptian name, Rameses, meaning in the hieroglyphics, "Book of the Sun-god"—the ninth king after Thothmes III., and the third monarch of the Nineteenth Dynasty, to earn for himself, especially, the evil distinction of the Oppressor of the Hebrews. The Exodus is believed by Maspero[3] to have taken place under Seti II., the next king but one after Rameses, but De Rougé, Chabas, Lenormant, Sayce, Lepsius, Brugsch, Ebers, and others agree in assigning it to the reign of Menephtah I., Rameses' son and successor.

It is hard to speak positively of dates so remote as those of the reigns of the monarchs before the Exodus, but it is safe to say that about fifteen hundred years before Christ, Ram-

[1] Graetz, vol. i. p. 370. [2] Uhlemann, p.4. [3] *Histoire, etc.*, p. 259.

eses was on the throne of Egypt. In any other country the only means of knowing the personal appearance of one so long dead would be from some contemporary portrait or written sketch, but in the valley of the Nile the ancient practice of embalming preserves the withered lineaments of humanity through age after age. The mummy of Rameses and that of Seti I., his father, with those of a large number of other Pharaohs, now lie as a show to all the world in the chambers of the museum at Gizeh. They were discovered in 1879 through the vigilance of Professor Maspero, then in charge of the Egyptian collections. Finding that the Arabs at Thebes were selling objects from some unknown royal tombs, he arrested the chief men and thus got the secret. In revealing it Maspero was led up the hills across the river, and shewn a cleft in the rocks, down which he was able to descend by a rope, into a deep pit, in which he found a chamber hewn out in the mountain. In this were eighteen huge mummy cases, including those containing Rameses and his father, and all were speedily lifted out and taken to the museum, where, on his mummy being unrolled, it was found that Rameses had been a man of five feet eleven inches in height. Of his features, now dried into black leather, no idea could, of course, be formed, beyond the fact that his nose was aquiline and his head rather under than over the usual size. It appeared that in the time of Rameses IX., about eleven hundred and thirty-three years before Christ, many royal tombs had been rifled, and that, to protect those still untouched, they had been removed and hidden where they have so recently been found.

The first chapters of Exodus imply that the facts they recount took place under kings who reigned in peace; for had they had defensive wars on their hands they could not have

oppressed the Hebrews, lest they should join the enemy. Such internal peace, as we shall see, marked the times of Rameses II., who, though in the earlier years of his rule engaged in foreign wars, passed the longer half of it in undisturbed quiet. The Nineteenth Dynasty had been founded by Rameses I., who had been succeeded, after a brief and obscure reign, by his son Sethos or Seti I., a great king. Under him the "outer nations" on the north-east, apparently an alliance of the remnants of the Hyksos with other related peoples, had once more overrun the Delta, to find sustenance for themselves and their cattle in the possessions of Pharaoh. But they had been driven back, and Palestine, their nearest stronghold, and even the region of the Orontes, had been invaded and conquered. Wars with Libya and with the nations south of Egypt had followed, but they had been succeeded by a long period of repose.

New temples at Thebes, Memphis, On, and elsewhere had marked Seti's reign; but the immense expenditure had pressed so heavily, that attention was once more given to the careful working of the gold mines of Nubia, to fill the empty treasury. The remembrance of the dangers of many former kings, from the shepherd races and their allies on the north-east, must, however, amidst all their glory, have caused both Seti and the young Rameses anxious thoughts; for the Hebrews and other allied races formed the bulk of the population of the Delta, and were likely to join invaders connected with them by blood. To weaken and cripple these Asiatic communities inside the great wall, must, therefore, have long been a settled aim of Egyptian policy.

Rameses[1] was undisturbed by any troubles in Egypt, or

[1] For sketches of Rameses, besides *Uarda*, see Brugsch, *Trans. of Soc. of Bib. Arch.*, vol. v. p. 28. *Eine Ægypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 229.

by any invasion, though his wars with the great Hittite empire of Western Asia lasted from the fourth to the twenty-first year of his reign, and ended in a treaty gladly made on both sides, after a struggle in which each was equally exhausted. Memorials of their campaigns still survive at widely distant points. I have seen with intense interest tablets sculptured by his command, on smoothed sheets of rock at the side of the narrow military road stretching to the Dog River, near Beirout, the one passage for armies north and south. The sea beats against the foot of the precipice below: the road is merely a shelf cut out in the cliffs, which rise steep from its inner side. His victories and campaigns are set forth, and he himself stands in a separate sculpture, at full length, in his royal robes; the road being broader before these memorials than elsewhere, as if extra width had been created, to give room for the high ceremonial of their religious consecration, by the priests in attendance. I have also seen, on the walls of the great buildings of Rameses, at Thebes, detailed sculptures of his Syrian wars. "The forts of Tabor, in the land of the Amorites," of Merom, of Salem, and of the taking of the revolted city of Ascalon are set forth among other historical delineations, which cover great spaces on the walls. The inscriptions, moreover, inform us that Rameses established a line of Egyptian fortresses as far north as Damascus: a fact to be remembered in connection with the invasion of Palestine by the Hebrews, not very much later. His wars were, however, not only carved on the great stones of his temples, but sung in lengthy verse by the court poet Pentaur.

The result of so many years of wasting strife was, after all, far below what might have been expected. An offensive

and defensive alliance was formed between Rameses and the Hittite rulers, each promising to come to the assistance of the other, if attacked, and agreeing to give up political offenders, criminals, or runaway slaves who had sought refuge within the boundaries of either empire.[1] From this time peace reigned on the Nile, and Rameses was free to carry out his policy of repression towards the Hebrews and their related fellow-settlers of the north-east of Egypt—at once to utilize their labour and to break their spirit. Such a period of quiet did not recur under his successors, who were disturbed by internal commotions, and thus, as has been said, Rameses seems marked out specially as the Pharaoh of the Oppression.

That he is rightly thought so, seems further established by the fact that the incidents related in the beginning of Exodus demand the long continuance of a single reign. Not only must the successive persecutions of the Hebrews have required a number of years, but Moses, on his return to Egypt after his residence of forty years in Midian, found the same king still on the throne. No Pharaoh, however, of the Nineteenth Dynasty held the sceptre thus long but Rameses II. The son of one who was not of pure royal blood, he had been regarded as the true king, through his mother, even from his birth, and had hence, from childhood,[2] been associated on the throne with his father; though he dates his reign only from Seti's death, when he himself was eighteen or twenty years of age. Yet he lived to wear the crown for sixty-seven years,[3] in wonderful accordance with the statement that "after a long time the king of

[1] Brugsch, vol. ii. p. 68.
[2] Lenormant, *Histoire Ancienne*, vol. i. p. 404.
[3] Brugsch, vol. ii. p. 110.

Egypt died."[1] His reign, therefore, answers precisely the conditions required by the Bible narrative.

The monuments of this great king still cover the soil of Egypt and Nubia in almost countless numbers, and show him to have been the greatest builder of all the Pharaohs.[2] There is not, says Mariette, a ruin in Egypt or Nubia that does not bear his name. Two grand temples at Ipsamboul, hewn out of the hills, with four colossal human figures, sixty-five feet high, at the entrances, were intended to perpetuate the memory of his victories over the Soudanese of Dongola and the Syrians. At Thebes, the great temple of Amenhotep III. was finished, and adorned with two huge obelisks in granite, one of which is now in Paris. The second huge porch or pylon of the great temple of Amon at Karnak was covered with tableaux, representing the wars with the Hittites or Kheta of the Orontes. The temple of Gournou, begun by Seti, was finished and consecrated. The Rameseum of Thebes, another great temple, is covered with sculptures also commemorating the Hittite wars. The temple of Abydos, built in honour of Seti, shows that king sitting on the throne in the midst of the gods; a club in one hand, in the other a sceptre. Gods sit on each side, and in rows behind him, while Rameses offers homage, in front, to his father, as to one of their number. Everywhere: at Memphis, at Bubastis, at the quarries of Silsilis, and at the mines of Sinai, similar memorials occur. The temple of Ptah, at Memphis, had a porch built by him at its entrance, at the sides of which were placed statues nearly fifty feet

[1] Exod. ii. 23: Lauth's translation. *Allgemeine Zeitung*, 1877, p. 429. So, De Wette and Augusti. Hitzig, *Geschichte*, p. 59, makes Joseph come to Egypt under Rameses II., and so does Bertheau (p. 233). Munk more justly assigns the date as during the reign of the Hyksos. *Palästina*, p. 264. So, writer in *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. v. p. 73.

[2] Maspero, pp. 225–6.

high,[1] of himself and his queen, besides the gigantic one rising more than a hundred feet high, near them, which has already been noticed. In the land of Goshen he built the vast temple of Zoan-Tanis, the city itself being, besides, rebuilt. He founded towns, dug canals, and filled the land with colossi, sphinxes, statues, and other creations. Of the thirty-two obelisks which yet exist in Egypt or elsewhere, twenty-one were either in whole or in part due to him ; and of the eight temples which still remain in the ruins of Thebes, there is only one which he did not complete or build entirely.[2] He also erected a chain of fortifications along the entire north-east frontier of Egypt, for 160 miles, to defend it from the invasions of the Syrians and Arabs. Cities which were endangered by the yearly inundations he protected by huge earthen dykes, and he intersected the entire region between Memphis and the sea with channels of irrigation so wide and so numerous, that it became henceforth impracticable for cavalry or war chariots, for which it had before been especially adapted. Herodotus further tells us, that he marked off the land thus reclaimed in square blocks, and distributed them among his Egyptian favourites, treating the Delta as a new province, now, for the first time, incorporated with the rest of the kingdom.

But with what an expenditure of human misery must all this have been attended ! It fills the mind with horror to think of the thousands of prisoners of war, or forced labourers and workmen, who must have died under the blows of the drivers, or under the weight of privations and toil too great for human endurance, in raising these innumerable creations. When slaves could not be had in sufficient num-

[1] Herod., ii. 110. Diod., i. 57. They were thirty cubits high.

[2] *Notes on Obelisks*, by J. Bonomi. *Trans. Royal Soc. Lit.*, vol. i. p. 158.

bers, after the close of the Syrian wars, great slave-hunting razzias to Ethiopia were organized, to harry the far south and drag off thousands of victims, in chains, to toil in the brickfield, the quarry, or the temple precincts. All the foreign tribes of Semitic origin who had settled in the Delta were oppressed by forced labour. Even the native population had to suffer. A letter of the period is still extant, which tells how "the tax-collector arrives (in his barge) at the wharf of the district, to receive the government share of the crops. His men, armed with clubs, are with him, and his negroes, with batons of palm-wood, cry out, 'Where's your wheat?' and there is no way of checking their exactions. If they are not satisfied, they seize the poor wretch, throw him on the ground, bind him, drag him off to the canal at hand, and throw him in, head first; the neighbours running off, to take care of their own grain, and leaving the poor creature to his fate. His wife is bound, and she and his children carried off." [1] The numbers of prisoners taken in wars were, indeed, far too small to meet the demand for labour on such vast and countless works as Rameses undertook, for in the records of each campaign the returns, carefully given, are singularly insignificant; men preferring death to the horrors of slavery.[2] He could only procure the toil required for works more numerous than those of all the other kings of Egypt for 2,000 years, by driving off to them, as forced labourers, all the population he could venture to enslave, the Hebrews among them.[3]

[1] Maspero, *Du Genre Épistolaire chez les Anciens Égyptiens*. Lenormant, *Manuel de l'Hist. Ancienne de l'Orient*, vol. i. p. 123. The priests told Diodorus that no native Egyptian had had to work on these vast constructions, but they knew well that this was not the truth.

[2] Even four, ten, or fifteen prisoners are carefully noted. The highest number taken in any one series of campaigns is given on the monuments as 2,400.

[3] Homer, in the *Odyssey*, xiv. 272, xvii. 441, makes Ulysses speak of the Egyptians as killing some of his crew and driving off the rest to slave labour.

The tasks to which they were set included all that the plans of Rameses demanded. They were doubtless marched in gangs to the quarries to hew out huge blocks of granite and limestone, and then set to drag them to their respective destinations, or to ship them on rafts and pilot them down the Nile. They would be employed in digging canals; in making bricks and mixing mortar for the countless erections always in progress; in painfully raising the Nile waters into the canals for irrigation, and their circulation over the land, as we still see it along the banks of the river, where the peasants, naked under the burning sun, work through the day, like pieces of machinery, drawing up the buckets of water from the stream, to the fields above. "All manner of service in the field," in short, would be exacted from them, "besides all their (other) labour, which they put upon them with rigour." [1]

"It is very hard to make the smooth road on which the colossus is to slide along," says an inscription of the period; "but how unspeakably harder to drag the huge mass like beasts of burden." There was no machinery then; little mechanical help; the strain lay almost wholly on human thews and sinews. "The arms of the workman," continues the inscription, "are utterly worn out. His food is a mixture of all things vile; he can wash himself only once in a season. But that which above all is wretched is when he has to drag for a month together, over the soft yielding soil of the gardens of a mansion, a huge block of ten cubits by six." [2] Egypt in all ages has been so marked by the oppres-

[1] Exod. i. 14.

[2] About 17 feet by 10. *Papyrus Sallier*, ii. 6, 1. Chabas, *Recherches sur la XIX^e Dynastie*, p. 144. 120,000 men died in digging out a canal to unite the Nile and the Red Sea, in the reign of Pharaoh Necho, and, after all, the scheme was abandoned on account of an adverse oracle. See also vol. i. pp. 438-9.

sion of its toiling thousands, that one of the crimes from which an Egyptian had to clear himself before the judge of the soul, was cruelty to them. Thirty thousand men died in this very century in digging out the Mahmoudieh Canal with their hands, without picks, or spades, or wheelbarrows —falling worn out with toil exacted from them by the blows of their pitiless taskmasters; and the monuments show similar misery to have been inflicted from the remotest ages. Doubtless the Hebrews suffered in the same way, and their groans and murmurs may well have taken the shape of those of the wretched fellahs of our own day, whose songs have such refrains as, "The chief of the village, may the dogs tear him, tear him, tear him:" "They starve us, they starve us:" "They beat us, they beat us:"—"But there's some one above who will punish them well, who will punish them well."[1]

The records strangely surviving from remote ages, on potsherds used by those too poor to buy proper material for writing, on papyri, or from relics found in ancient ruins themselves, confirm the fact that the poorer classes have always been much oppressed in Egypt, and the Hebrews must have shared their hardships to the full. The social condition of the ancient fellah was mainly that of serfdom. He formed part of the rich landowner's estate; and if the estate were sold, he went with the soil which his ancestors had tilled for immemorial generations. Yet he was not a slave. He was under the direct protection and supervision of the law. He was bound, for instance, to present himself at stated periods before the government scribes, who entered his name, age, and special employment in the official rolls, together with a description of his person, and a note as to

[1] Nassau Senior's *Journal in Egypt*, 1856. Stephens' *Incidents*, vol. 1. p. 22.

his good or bad conduct during the year. This is a scene frequently represented in the tomb-paintings. If sent by his master from one part of the country to another, the serf was required to carry a written permit or passport. If he ran away, he could be pursued only by the police, and judged only by the magistrate. His owner, though wielding a paternal right of corporal punishment, was evidently no irresponsible proprietor of a human chattel. The stick might be laid freely enough across the back of an idle labourer; the bastinado might be applied to the soles of his feet; but the master could not, in old Egyptian phrase, "give breath." In other words, he exercised no power of life and death. In the case of runaway serfs, the law was supreme: not even a royal prince being free to act for himself. The right of petitioning Pharaoh was open to the meanest of his subjects, even those who, being too poor to buy a bit of papyrus, had to write their lowly supplication to the monarch on a worthless potsherd. The craftsmen of the town were often serfs like the peasants, and it is hard to say which had the harder lot. In the old papyrus, already quoted, we have a glimpse of peasant life. "Behold," it says, "the humble farm labourer. His whole life is consumed amid the beasts of the fields. His strength is spent in tending the vines and the hogs. He seeks his food in the fields. If he is well, he is well among the cattle; if he is sick, he lies on the bare ground in the midst of the herds."

Such was the condition of the mere labourer. The small cultivator—also a serf, but standing a grade higher in the social scale—was no better off. The terrible picture quoted on a former page, of the tyranny exercised on the fellah, to get his crop for the government, dates from the time of Rameses II., but this of the farm labourer is more than fif-

teen hundred years older, so that the same tale of misery had marked the peasant in all ages.

But deplorable as was the lot of the fellah, the condition of the workman would seem to have been even more wretched. In the country, his position somewhat resembled that which is occupied in India by the artisan dependents of the native nobles. He lived on his master's premises, and plied his craft in workshops superintended by his master's overseers. For, as in India now, every landed proprietor numbered among his hereditary bondsmen a staff of masons, joiners, painters, carvers, weavers, glass-blowers, metal-workers, and the like, whose labour belonged to their owner, and whose lives were consumed in toiling for his pleasure. I have already quoted some illustrations of their condition from an old papyrus dating from the Twelfth Dynasty, in which the sufferings of the workingman are sketched in the gloomiest colours that the writer's palette contains. The metal-worker, he says, not only toils all day, but works at night by torchlight; the mason, exposed to every bitter wind, is a prey to sickness; the dyer's eyes are worn with sleeplessness, and his hand never rests; the blacksmith's fingers are rough as crocodile-skin, and the back of the stone-cutter is well-nigh broken.

The weaver, imprisoned inside the house, is more helpless than a woman. He sits crouching, his knees higher than his heart. He tastes not the free air. If for a single day he fail to weave the prescribed length of stuff, he is bound with cords, like a bundle of the marsh lotus. It is only by bribing the storekeeper with gifts of bread that he gets out to look on the light of day. The painted tombs of Thebes and Beni Hassan show that this picture is not exaggerated. All these craftsmen are to be seen at their work, and there is

always an overseer, stick in hand, with them. How cruel the tyranny of this petty tyrant, may also be seen in frequent pictures of the bastinado inflicted at his orders on men, women, and even young children.

A few craftsmen, like a few of the peasants, were independent, working for wages, on their own account, but living, even in good times, after all their toil, only from hand to mouth. The great majority of town workmen, however, like the peasantry as a rule, were serfs. At Thebes, where the right bank looking down the stream was the city of the living, while the left bank was that of the dead, the workmen were mostly bondmen of the Church. Half, at least, of the inhabited city consisted of temples, sacred colleges, sacred enclosures, and ecclesiastic domains, while the whole of the city of the dead on the other side of the river belonged to the priests. On the right, the living side, the sacred buildings and grounds were all hemmed in by humble dwellings, the ruins of which may still be traced. On the left—the dead side—all the miles of cemetery up the stony valley and in the cliffs—slopes and cliffs being everywhere pierced with tier on tier of rock-tombs—were skirted by countless workshops, and by the multitudinous hovels of quarrymen, masons, coffin-makers, painters, gilders, carvers, and embalmers, who formed the population of the great city of tombs.

The wages of these widely different and yet related trades were paid in bread, for coined money had not yet been invented, commerce being carried on by barter, metal rings, coils, and bars being only used in payment of tribute or in large transactions. The circulating medium needed in daily life, and the current cash in Ancient Egypt was corn, which took the place of money from the earliest date of which we

have records. The state granaries were the public banks, and an order for so many measures of corn was equivalent to a draft on the treasury. Taxes were paid in corn. The soldier, the civil functionary, the crown pensioner were all paid in corn. Loans were effected in corn ; and, long after minted money had come, under the Ptolemies, into general circulation, corn continued to be the popular factor in matters of sale and purchase. As with the soldiers' pay, so with the wages of the workmen. Corn for long payments, bread for short payments, was everywhere the rule. For a workman, two loaves, for a soldier, three, were the daily allowance; a measure of oil being sometimes added to the workman's allowance where his task was specially laborious, as in the case of dragging heavy stones. Respecting this kind of work, for example, a papyrus order is sent by the superintendent : "As soon as thou shalt receive this written communication, hasten to push forward the work in the abode of Rameses Mer-Amen (to whom be life, health, and strength !). Let there be no negligence, no lassitude. Note that the men be divided into three gangs, each gang under its captain ; six hundred men, making for each gang two hundred. Make them drag the three great blocks which are [lying] before the gate of the temple of Muth, and not for one single day be it omitted to give out their rations of corn and oil. . . . Also, let oil be given to each driver of a pair of oxen." Workmen, in many cases, were paid by the month, and as they were proverbially improvident, the corn that should have served till next payment was often squandered long before it came. Hence rose grievous troubles. A notebook of a superintendent of the great Theban necropolis, for example, written apparently in the reign of Rameses III., informs us how the book-keeper and certain priests of the

necropolis were met on the first day of Tybi (December 27) by a deputation from the workmen's quarter. "Behold," said the spokesman, "we are brought face to face with starvation. We have neither food, oil, nor clothing; we have no fish; we have no vegetables. Already have we sent up a petition to our sovereign lord the Pharaoh, praying that he will give us these things, and we are going to appeal to the governor that we may have wherewithal to live." It was the first of the month, when the general distribution of corn was evidently due, and we are not told why that distribution did not take place. Perhaps the clerk of the stores was absent from his post, or perhaps the men had already drawn some of their wages on account. Be this as it may, their need was urgent, and the priests through compassion, or to keep the affair from the ears of the governor of the necropolis, granted them one day's rations. How they fared after this we know not; but a few weeks later they are in open revolt. Thrice they break out of their own quarter, which is surrounded by walls and closed by gates, like the Roman Ghetto of old. "We will not go back," replies one to the police officers who are sent after them. "Go tell your captain what we say: it is famine that speaks through our mouths!" To parley with them is vain. "There was much commotion," writes the superintendent in his note-book. "I gave them the most serious answer I could devise, but their words were true from the heart." Pacified by a dole of half rations, they at length return to work, but in ten days they are on strike again. Khons, the ringleader, urges his mates to help themselves. "Let us go down," he says, "to the store-house on the quay, and let the governor's men tell him what we have done." The advice is acted upon as soon as given. They force their way, not into the strong store-

house, but into the enclosure. The storekeeper remonstrates, gives them something, and induces them to return to their quarters. Again, after eleven days, the riot breaks out afresh. The commandant of Thebes passes by, and finds the men sitting on the ground behind the temple of Seti, at the northern extremity of the necropolis. They cry "Famine!" and the great man gives them an order for fifty measures of corn, in the name of Pharaoh, "who has sworn an oath," he says, "that you shall be fed." The Pharaoh, in all probability, has never heard of those petty local mutinies or received the petition which the poor fellows drew up a month or two before. But of this they have no suspicion. Pharaoh to them represents an all-seeing and all-knowing Providence, and they go on their way rejoicing.

Thus closes our notice of the earliest strike on record, lighting up for us the social condition of the poorer classes on the Nile in the days before the Exodus, and bringing the lot of Israel in those times vividly before us. Very wretched in any case, it must have been almost intolerable with great numbers, yet with such glimpses of lentils, fish, garlic, and cucumbers, in rare happy moments, as waked bitter recollections of the contrast when they found themselves in the bare waste of the desert. When on the Nile, I, myself, indeed, saw a strange spectacle which seemed to bring back these long-dead ages. A vast crowd of labourers had been collected to scoop out the soil, so as to form the channel of a wide and deep new canal. Wages they got none: they were driven to the spot to give forced labour. Swarms, thick and quick-moving as ants, hurried hither and thither in bewildering confusion: filling baskets with their hands and then marching off with them on their heads. The labourers at the sugar factories fared still worse, for they were hurried

along at a trot by taskmasters with great whips in their hands, freely used where fatigue made the toiler slow. A lash over the bare back quickened even the faintest; and if any one fell in a faint, for the day was very hot, a bucket of cold water was thrown over him, and there he lay, to die or get better, as might be. At night they lay on the ground, without any covering, though the nights were cold. Coughing rose on all sides in the darkness, for the exposure brings on disease of the lungs, from which many die.

The Bible statement, that the Hebrews "built for Pharaoh the store cities Pithom and Raamses,"[1] is strangely corroborated in the case of the latter by contemporary documents, which mention the Israelites under the name of Aperiu or Aberiu, the Egyptian pronunciation of their own way of naming themselves, as the "Ibĕrim,"[2] or, as we say, Hebrews. In the first, a scribe called Kaonisar writes to his superior, the scribe Bekenptah, thus: "For your satisfaction I have obeyed the command you gave me, saying, Deliver their food to the soldiers, and also to the Aperiu who transport the stone for the great Bekhennu—depots and fortified magazines—of the king Rameses, the lover of Amon, which are under the charge of Ameneman, the chief of the Mazai. I give them rations each month according to your excellent instructions."[3] The second document is from

[1] By "store cities" are meant depots for all kinds of provisions, war material, etc., perhaps like Woolwich great magazines for the public service, in short. *Durch Gosen*, p. 521.

[2] The Egyptian plural ended in *u*, instead of the *m* of the Hebrew.

[3] *Papyr. Hier. of Leyden*, i. 348. Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, p. 502. Chabas, *Mélanges*, 1st series, p. 44; 3d series, vol. ii. p. 222. This papyrus was found in the tombs at Memphis. It shows that while corn was the staple of payment, the workmen exchanged it at the dealers', for other articles as desired. Possibly, also, the rations in a few cases were varied, as in this papyrus, but it must have been a rare exception. Wheat, meat, fish, fresh or salted, and vegetables, were provided by government for labourers, but the quantity was at times so insufficient that the works had to be suspended from the weakness of the starved men. Chabas, *Deux Pap. Hier.*, p. 24.

another scribe to his superior, Hiu, a high official of Rameses II. "I have obeyed," says he, "your command to give provision to the Egyptian soldiers, and also to the Hebrews who transport the stones"—great blocks dragged from the other side of the river—"for the Sun-temple of Rameses-Miamun, on the southern part of Memphis." Mazai, or gendarmerie, a corps of foreign mercenaries drawn from Libya, and thus in no danger of sympathy with the oppressed, filled the hateful office of the under taskmasters who punished the wretched gangs.[1]

An interesting contemporary account of Rameses-Tanis, the Rameses especially mentioned in Exodus, has already been given, but a second, also, has fortunately been preserved. "His majesty, Rameses II.," writes a scribe to his friend, "has built for himself a town, Rameses. It lies between Palestine and Egypt, and abounds in delicious food. It is a second Hermouthis (a suburbs of Thebes), and will endure as long as Memphis. The sun rises and sets in it. Every one leaves his town to settle in its district. The fishermen of the sea bring it eels and fish, and the tribute of their lake. The citizens wear festal robes each day, with perfumed oil on their heads, and new wigs: they stand at their doors, bouquets in hand—green branches from the town of Pa Hathor—garlands from the town of Pahour, on the day of Pharaoh's coming. Joy reigns and spreads without bounds. Rameses-Miamun, life, health, strength to him; he is the god Muth[2] of the two Egypts in his speech: the sun of kings as ruler: the glory of Egypt, the friend of Tum, as general. All the earth comes to him. The great king of the Kheta—the Hittites[3]—sends his messenger to

[1] *Durch Gosen*, p. 75.

[2] One of the three gods of Thebes.

[3] By the way, it is curious to find that Rameses used blood-hounds to hunt down his foes, in the Hittite war. *Trans. Bib. Arch.*, vol. ii. p. 180.

his fellow-prince of Kadesh (on the Orontes), saying, 'If thou be ready, let us set out for Egypt, for the words of the god Rameses II. are fulfilling themselves. Let us pay our court to him at Tanis, for he gives breath to him whom he loves, and by him all the people live.'"[1]

The excavations recently made at Tel-el-Maskhuta—the name given to large mounds near Tel-el-Kebir, so well known in the late Egyptian war—a place about thirty-five miles north-east of Cairo, near the railway to Ismailia, have settled the position of Pithom, and the fact that it was built by order of Rameses II. M. Naville found inscriptions which not only show that these mounds cover an ancient city whose religious name was Pithom, while its civil name was Succoth, but also that the founder was Rameses II. In Greek times—long after the Exodus—its name was Heroöpolis, or Ero, from the Egyptian word *ara*, "a storehouse," reminding us that both Pithom and Rameses, built by the Israelites, for the Pharaoh, were "treasure" or "store" cities. M. Naville even discovered the store chambers themselves. They are very strongly constructed, and divided by brick partitions from 8 to 10 feet thick, the bricks being sun-baked, and made, some with and some without straw. In these bricks without straw we have a commentary on the words of Scripture: "Thus saith the Pharaoh, I will not give you straw." The treasure chambers occupy almost the whole area of the old city, the walls of which are about 650 feet square and 22 feet thick. Its name was in Egyptian "The City of the Setting Sun," or "Tum," and we now see that the Hebrews finally set out from it—that is, from the very place where they were at

[1] Maspero, *Du Genre Épistolaire, etc.*, p. 102. Chabas, *Mélanges Égyptologiques*, 2d series, p. 151. For the divinity of the Pharaoh, see also Maspero, *Histoire Anc.*, p. 9. *Records of the Past*, vol. i. pp. 6, 8.

work—for "Succoth," its civil name, is given as the point from which they started.[1]

The square area, which contains about 55,000 square yards, shows the ruins of a temple and various monuments, from which the inscriptions have been erased. The store chambers or granaries were intended to provide food for the armies sent out at any time to the north-east, over the desert, and the town was itself a fort of defence on that frontier. Its names, Pi Tum, "The City of the Setting Sun," and Succoth, were repeatedly found on other inscriptions. M. Naville's words about the bricks are: "Many of them are made with straw, or with fragments of reeds, of which traces are still to be seen; and some are of Nile mud, without any straw at all." In the lowest course the bricks are well made, in the middle ones there is rough straw or reeds in them, but in the higher courses there is neither straw nor reeds.[2]

Rameses or "Tanis," named after the king, as Alexandria was after Alexander, or Constantinople after Constantine, ranked next to Thebes in the preference of its second founder. He could easily march from it against the Asiatic peoples, and it was near the frontier, to welcome him back from his wars. Hence it became his special residence. Connected with the sea by the Tanitic branch of the Nile, then broad and navigable, it also commanded the entrance of the great fortified road to Palestine, and thus was, in the fullest sense, the key of Egypt. It was doubtless for this

[1] Exod. xiii. 20.

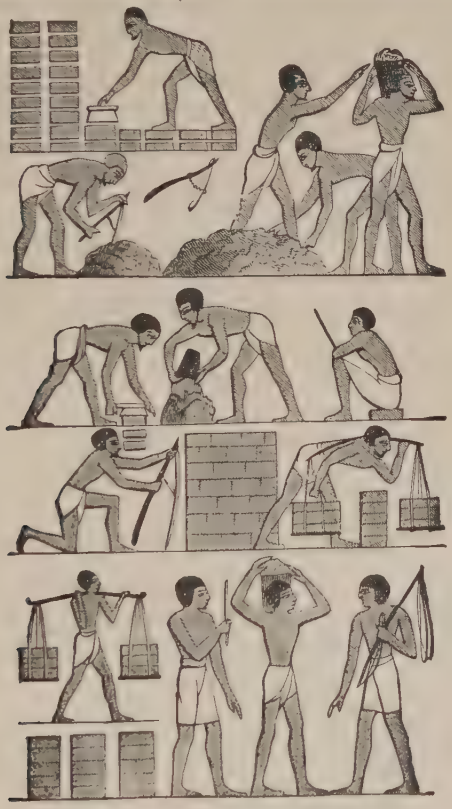
[2] Near the ruins of Pithom there are still some pools mentioned in an ancient papyrus, in connection with a request made to Menephtah, the king of the Exodus, from some Bedouins of Idumea, to be allowed to pasture their herds in the neighbourhood. The word used for the pools is Barkabuta, which implies the residence of Semitic herdsmen around, for it is evidently connected with the Hebrew word for a pool, Beraichah, pl. Beraichoth.

reason that Rameses restored it from its ruins and transferred his court thither; making it in fact a temple city of the great gods of Egypt, and of Baal Sutekh, the god of the Hyksos.[1] In its glory, as Moses saw it, with its countless statues, obelisks, sphinxes, and other monuments, and its great temples and majestic royal palace, it must have been imposing in its magnificence; especially in the eyes of the Hebrew population, in whose midst it had risen like a city of enchantment, though at a fearful cost of suffering to themselves.

An old writing on the back of a papyrus, apparently of the date of Seti, the founder of the Nineteenth Dynasty, brings vividly before us a picture of the brickmaking, which was part of the labours of the Hebrews. "Twelve masons," says the writer, "besides men who are brick moulders in their towns, have been brought here to work at house building. *Let them make their number of bricks each day.* They are not to relax their tasks at the new house. It is thus I obey the command given me by my master."[2] These twelve masons and these brickmakers, thus taken from their own towns to build this house, at a fixed rate of task work daily, may not have been Hebrews, but their case illustrates exactly the details of Hebrew slavery given in Exodus. Nor is it, in the opinion of so calm a mind as that of Ebers, too much to believe that the bricks of Pithom were moulded by Jewish hands.[3] Indeed, even the details of brickmaking like theirs are supplied by the monuments. In a tomb on the hill Abd-el-Qurnah, a picture of the time of Thothmes III. has been preserved, in which prisoners of war, set to build the temple of Amon, are seen toiling at the

[1] Brugsch, vol. ii. p. 95.
[2] *Papyrus Anastasi*, back of pl. 3. Chabas, *Mélanges Égypt*, 2d series, p. 133.
[3] *Durch Gosen*, p. 75.

bitter labours of the brickfield. Some carry water in jugs from the tank hard by; others knead and cut up the loamy earth; others, again, make bricks in earthen moulds, or



SLAVES IN THE EGYPTIAN BRICKFIELDS.
From Tomb of Abd-el-Qurnah.

place them carefully in long rows, to dry; and some are building walls. An accompanying inscription states that these are captives whom Thothmes III. had carried away, to

build the house of his father, the god Amon. The "baking of the bricks" is for a new provision house of the god. Nor is there wanting a taskmaster; for the overseer watches the workers; the words, "Don't idle, the stick is in my hand," being painted as if coming from his lips.[1]

The monuments often, indeed, speak of brickmaking by forced labour, and in the various paintings which represent this, or any other kind of "task work," the overseer with his stick is rarely absent. Thus, among the pictures at Beni Hassan, workmen are represented being beaten severely with short sticks, which differed from the long rods of office, and were used solely to bastinado the unfortunate labourers. Some of these are seen thrown naked on the ground, two men holding the arms and another the feet, while the taskmaster showers blows on the exposed body. There are even pictures at Beni Hassan of women and children being thus bastinadoed. The taskmasters in Exodus—literally Chiefs of the Tribute—were dignified officials, apparently over large divisions of the corvée. Inferior officers were placed over sections of these, and the zekānim, or elders, and the shoterim, or scribes, of the Hebrews themselves, seem to have been responsible for the work to be done by the men of their respective localities.

The Hebrew word for the straw used by the unhappy toilers is Teben—straw broken into pieces by the teeth of the threshing sledges, and by the feet of the oxen used to draw them.[2] It is kept in pits to be always dry. One sees great stacks of it also, in the straw merchants' yards, in Cairo. The Hebrews, not being supplied with this, as was usual in brickmaking, would have to lose time gathering the

[1] Bunsen's *Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 114. Brugsch, *La Sortie des Hebreux d'Egypte*, pp. 14, 15. Brugsch, *Histoire*, vol. i. p. 376.

[2] See *Hours*, vol. iv. pp. 371, 381.

straw left on the fields from the previous harvest, or the reeds from the banks of the canals or of the Nile, and yet had to finish a given number of bricks a day.

Sun-dried bricks, like those made by the Hebrews, are now made, in Palestine, and also in Egypt, by leading water, or pouring it, into ditches dug in the clay. Teben is next mixed with the soft mass, which is then lifted in wooden bowls, and packed into wooden frames of about ten inches length, and of proportionate breadth and depth; and these, when thus filled, are left in the sun, till the bricks are dried. They are made, in Palestine, in spring.

CHAPTER IV.

MOSES.

How long the policy of oppression had been in force against the Hebrews before the Exodus, can only be conjectured. As far back as the days of the great Thothmes III. we have seen Asiatic prisoners of war toiling in the brickfields,[1] as the Israelites had to do under Rameses. The hostility towards all the Semitic races, as the special enemies of Egypt for ages, and as, for centuries, its masters, in the dark days of the Hyksos, would, indeed, naturally direct itself against the Hebrews, their brethren in race. Whether the distrust and hatred had been deepened by the part taken by the Asiatic population of the Delta during the long war of liberation, cannot now be ascertained; but, even if they had been neutral, any favour shown them would have seemed an encouragement to the common enemy, within Egypt itself. It would almost appear, moreover, as if a clause in the treaty of Rameses II. with the Kheta or Hittites, alluding to fugitive subjects who were to be sent back from Palestine, hints at a restlessness in the Semitic races still in Lower Egypt, which needed to be vigorously repressed.[2] Nor is it clear that the Hebrews, a people full of young life and energy, and rapidly increasing in numbers, had not been for generations plotting their escape from the banks of the Nile; for the flight of bands sufficient to lead

[1] Page 110.

[2] Brugsch, *Histoire*, vol. ii. p. 74.

to a provision for their extradition, in the Hittite treaty, must have represented a state of feeling far from settled. That they were fierce and warlike, even while in Egypt, and that they often made forays into Canaan, is hinted at in various passages of the Old Testament. Thus, as has before been noticed, the sons of Ephraim are said to have made an inroad, during their father's life, as far at least as Gath, to drive off the cattle of the Philistines.[1] Sherah, a daughter of Ephraim, moreover, is said to have built the upper and lower villages of Beth-horon, the "Hollow way," the one at the head, the other at the bottom, of the wild steep pass of the border hills of Ephraim and Benjamin;[2] and, also, Uzzen Sherah—Sherah's inheritance—another village presumably in the same district.[3] The grandchildren of Judah, moreover, were not only famous in after ages for the fine linen which they had learned to weave, doubtless in Egypt, but also for having held "the dominion in Moab."[4] No wonder that the Pharaohs should have been alarmed lest such a race should multiply still more, and, joining their enemies, fight against Egypt in case of war, and "get them up out of the land,"[5] where slaves so hardy and enduring were essential for the public works.

But while the mighty kings of the Nile valley were bent on weakening the Hebrews by every form of tyranny and

[1] Chron. vii. 21.

[2] Furrer's *Palästina*, p. 14. "Beth-horon," in Riehm.

[3] 1 Chron. vii. 24.

[4] 1 Chron. iv. 22. The word Jashubi-lehem is understood by Bertheau, *Kurzgefass. Handbuch*, as the name of one of the sons of Sherah. It means "returning to the bread," perhaps an abbreviation of Beth lehem, "returning to Bethlehem," as Ruth did. By some scholars the words "held the dominion," are translated "became citizens of." So Septuagint, Vulgate, Schlottmann. But Gesenius, Bertheau, Keil, and Hitzig retain the meaning in our version. Hitzig translates the name Jashubi-lehem by "and requited them." Ewald makes it "brought them home wives:" fanciful enough, both!

[5] Exod. i. 10.

oppression, they were themselves, in the providence of God, to be made the agents in preparing one of the hated race to become in due time its deliverer. Jewish tradition touchingly describes the condition of these ancestors of the nation. Joseph, it tells us, had been almost universally loved by the Egyptians; but, after his death, though the Hebrews turned so much towards Egyptian ways, as even in many cases to neglect the circumcision of their children, popular dislike increased against them. Taxes and forced labour were exacted, instead of their being left free, as hitherto. Fields, vineyards, and other possessions, given them by Joseph, were taken from them, and they were formally enslaved. They had, moreover, to build fortresses, store cities, and pyramids; to lead off the Nile waters into canals, surround towns with dams, to keep off the yearly inundations; to learn all kinds of trades that they might work at them for their masters, and even the women had to toil in many ways.[1] But help was now slowly preparing.

Among the Hebrew tribes in Egypt that of Levi appears from the first to have specially given itself to the higher culture which prevailed around, and to have held the foremost place, as in some degree a priestly caste.[2] Other tribes doubtless gave themselves, more or less, to the arts and sciences which flourished in the valley of the Nile—the painting, the sculpture, the weaving, the dyeing, the working in precious stones and in metals; but to Levi the whole were indebted for the adoption of writing from the Egyptians,[3]

[1] Beer's *Leben Moxis*, p. 9. The Rabbis, in their desire to glorify the Hebrew matrons, gravely say that six, twelve, or even sixty children were born at a birth, all strong and well formed! *Ibid.*, p. 12. The allusion to the neglect of circumcision as copied from the Egyptians, is, of course, an error on the part of the tradition, as also is the reference to the building of pyramids.

[2] 1 Sam. ii. 27, 28. These verses are to be read, not interrogatively, but as statements of facts. Graetz, p. 14.

[3] Graetz, vol. i. p. 14.

and the higher "wisdom" was apparently left to their study. Among their number was Amram—the "Kindred of the Lofty One"—and Jochebed—she "whose glory is Jehovah" —his aunt,[1] both of the tribe of Levi,[2] and of the family of Kohath, the second of Levi's sons. From the marriage of these two sprang the great leaders, Miriam, Aaron, and Moses, the first about twelve years older than her second illustrious brother, who was also younger than Aaron by about three years.[3] Their mother's name, alone, proves that her family had remained true to the hereditary faith of their race, and still clung to the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: keeping far from Egyptian idolatry and corruption. Her children must have grown up in an atmosphere of saintly morals and godliness, to have developed the character they afterwards showed. But to the inspired writers the most exalted human being was only dust and ashes in the sight of the Almighty, and details are studiously shunned which could by any possibility lead to a hero worship incompatible with the absolute and undivided honour due only to God. Hence we know very little of the personal history of the illustrious household.

Moses appears to have been born about eighty years before the Exodus, for that was his age when he returned to Egypt from Midian. Thus, his youth runs side by side with that of Rameses II., the future oppressor of the Hebrews, but the national hero of the Egyptians, and the great Sesostris of the outside world; whose glory, as, like all the Pharaohs, in the belief of all their subjects, a god in human form, was the special theme of Egyptian poetry and legend. Exodus tells

[1] Exod. vi. 20.

[2] *Sept.* and *Heb.* Exod. ii. 1. "Son" in our version = to "descendant." 1 Chron. vi. 2.

[3] "Moses," in Riehm.

us, that at the time of the birth of Moses, an edict to put to death all new-born Hebrew male children was in its early vigorous force, so that Jochebed could save her infant during the first three months of its life only by hiding it. At that time his birth became known to Pharaoh's police, and nothing remained but to let him be put to death, or to trust him to the care of Providence in a way of which she may very likely have heard, in a legend brought by her ancestors, from their ancient home in Chaldæa. There, a great king, Sargon I., had caused a most romantic story of his own birth to be recorded on the clay tablets of the royal library.

"I am Sargon, the great king, the king of Agada," said he. "My mother was of the masters of the land, but I never knew my father. I was born secretly in the city of Atzupirani, on the banks of the Euphrates. My mother put me in an ark of bulrushes lined with bitumen, and laid me in the river, which did not enter the ark. It bore me to the dwelling of Akki, the water-carrier,[1] and he, in the goodness of his heart, lifted me from the water, and brought me up as his own son. After this he established me as a gardener, and (the goddess) Ishtar caused me to prosper, and, after years, I came to be king."[2] Acting either on the hint of this strange legend, or led in a like case to a similar course, Jochebed prepared a little ark of papyrus, and after coating it with bitumen, to prevent the water from reaching

[1] A labourer of the lowest and meanest class. See Josh. ix. 21, 23, 27. Here, it means, strictly, one who works a shadoof, to raise water from the river, for irrigation.

[2] Smith's *Chaldæan Genesis*, p. 299. Fox Talbot, in *Trans. of Soc. of Bib. Arch.*, vol. i. p. 271, and in *Records of the Past*, vol. v. p. 1. Lenormant. *Les Premières Civilizations*, vol. ii. p. 104. Mr. Talbot translates the last two lines thus: "He placed me with a tribe of Foresters and they made me king." He supposes that he became captain of this band of rude people and from this rose to power. Ishtar was the Assyrian Venus.

the child, put him in it: doubtless with many a prayer. She then laid it among the papyrus reeds on the edge of one of the broad canals at Tanis, or Rameses, where she lived, and set the infant's sister, a girl of about twelve, to watch his fate from a distance. An inscription found by Ebers, if he translate it aright, seems to point to Tanis, "the field of Zoan," and the scene of his future "wonders," as the birthplace of the destined lawgiver. In this case his exposure took place, not on the broad stream of the Nile at Memphis, as one tradition has asserted, but far to the north, among the Hebrew population of the Delta, on one of the flowing canals of irrigation which spread in a network over the land. Rameses, it would appear from the curious document in question, was living at Tanis exactly eighty years before the date[1] fixed by Lepsius[2] as that of the Exodus—B.C. 1314,[3] though this is not accepted by other weighty authorities, who assign it to the year B.C. 1460. From the vast numbers of the Hebrews who left Egypt, when Moses was eighty years of age, it is not likely that the command

THE PAPYRUS.

[1] *Durch Gosen*, p. 82.

[2] *Chronologie der Ægypter*, vol. i. p. 314.

[3] Exod. vii. 7. Diestel thinks the date of the Exodus, B.C. 1491. Schenkel gives B.C. 1460.

to destroy the male infants remained long in force, but it could only have been given under the influence of immediate contact with the evil against which it was directed; that is, while Rameses was in residence at his northern Delta capital—Tanis.

According to the custom of the court, his family doubtless attended him, and thus the presence of the princess by whom Moses was rescued is explained. In those days the papyrus, now found at the fountain of Arethusa and the Blue River, at Syracuse, in Sicily, and only in the far southern White Nile, must have grown thickly in the broad canals of Lower Egypt. In its pleasant screen the little ark would be protected from the sun; while the privacy secured would attract the ladies of the court to a spot so suited for the frequent bathing demanded alike from the heat of the climate, and as a religious requirement. The slow current, and limited surface, moreover, would prevent any danger of the ark being swept out of sight, as it might well have been on the broad bosom of the Nile.[1]

If the dates on which Ebers relies be correct, Seti I. must have been still reigning when Moses was born, and with him his young child Rameses, being associated with him as joint king; for, as already said, he was thus honoured from his infancy, on account of his pure royal descent through his mother. The daughter of Pharaoh by whom the baby was saved[2] must, therefore, have been a sister of Rameses. Seti, however, in accordance with Egyptian custom, had made over to Rameses in his early youth, as his wives, a number of ladies from the royal harem, and among these, it is more than likely, the rescuer of Moses; for, as we have already

[1] See *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. p. 255.

[2] The gorgeous dress of a daughter of Pharaoh is described in Ebers' *Uarda*, vol i. pp. 63, 64, 297, and in his *Ægypt. Königstochter*, vol. ii. p. 247.

seen, a marriage of brother and sister was thought in Egypt, as in Ancient Persia, the best possible for a prince; to guarantee the purity of the divine blood of the royal house. The practice, indeed, prevailed on the Nile as late as the times of the Ptolemies.[1]

Though not given in the Bible, the name of the "daughter of Pharaoh" has been handed down by tradition as Thermouthis,[2] and also as Merris,[3] both which occur in the inscriptions. Thus, Thermouthis is the name of an Egyptian town, in a fragment of Stephen of Byzance,[4] and, in a list of princesses, the monuments name one as Meri, which is evidently identical with Merris;[5] while they give Thermouthis, the very name in Josephus, as that of one of the wives of Rameses.[6] He had also a favourite daughter, Bent Anat—the heroine of Ebers' charming story *Uarda*—and married her, as he had done his sister Thermouthis. So low was the morality of the Nile valley, even round the throne of the greatest of all its kings.

A curious fact, which, however, is of questionable value, is mentioned by Brugsch. An inscription dating from about a hundred years after the death of Rameses II., the great Sesostris, speaks of a place in Middle Egypt which seems to refer to the Hebrew Lawgiver. It is called T-en Moshé—"the island," or "the river bank of Moses." It

[1] *Ægypt. Königstochter*, vol. iii. pp. 122 291. That, in spite of prohibition by the law (Lev. xviii. 9. 11), marriages of brothers and sisters were not unknown in Israel, is seen from 2 Sam. xiii. 13.

[2] Jos., *Ant.*, II. ix. 5. [3] Euseb., *Præp. Evang.*, ix. 27.

[4] A Greek geographer of the sixth century, who wrote a great geographical dictionary, fragments of which only are extant.

[5] Brugsch, vol. ii. p. 112.

[6] Lenormant, *Histoire Ancienne*, vol. i. p. 423. Maspero, *L'Inscription Dédicatoire du Temple d'Abydos*, p. 29. Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, p. 525. Thermouthis means "Beloved by the goddess Muth."

lay on the eastern side of the river, near the city of the heretic King Khu-n-Aten.[1] But, unfortunately, the locality does not suit that of the exposure of the infant destined to be so illustrious.

The meaning of the name Moses is given in Exodus as "drawn out" (from the water); and this is supported by the fact that the words *mo* and *shi*, respectively, mean still, in Coptic, the modern representation of ancient Egyptian, "water," and "to take." That it is a Hebraized form of an Egyptian name appears certain, but the original form is believed by modern scholars to have been Mesu, which often appears in Egyptian writings, and was written "Mosis" by the Greeks.[2] Josephus[3] derives it from the Egyptian words, *mo*, water, and *uses*, "the saved one;" and this was evidently the opinion also, before his day, of the Alexandrian translators of the Bible, who give the name as Mōüses. Keil and Delitzsch, by a slight change in the form of the derivatives, trace it to two Coptic words, *mo*, "water," and *udsche*, "to be saved from," believing that the combination of these two was softened in Mosche, the Hebrew way of writing the great prophet's name. But here, as elsewhere, the zeal of modern science has presented a new aspect of things. A Babylonian text lately discovered in Upper Egypt, dating from the old times of the Tel Amarna tablets, shows that the name of one of the Mesopotamian gods, known also as Uras, "the god of light," and Baru, "the Creator," was more commonly Masu, "the hero," but, also, "a leader," a "writer," and used, besides, as the name of the "Sun-god who rises from the divine day." Masu, however, is, letter for letter, the same as the Hebrew Mosheh,

[1] Brugsch, vol. ii. p. 112.
[2] Lepsius, *Chronologie*, vol. i. p. 326. Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, p. 526.
[3] *Ant.*, II. ix. 6.

our "Moses." Ebers always speaks of him, when wishing to use the Egyptian form, as Mesu.

Handed over to the care of his mother during his tender years—thanks to the quick wit of his sister Miriam—Moses became a permanent inmate of the palace in his early boyhood. Once there, he was adopted by Thermouthis, and received the care and training of a king's son; Rameses the Oppressor becoming unconsciously his Protector! Ebers has given us an idea of the splendour amidst which the wondering child must thus have grown up. The palace of Rameses, at Tanis, he tells us,[1] was more like a little town than a house. The part of it used by the royal family commanded a view of the Nile, from which it offered to the passing vessels a pleasing prospect, for it stood, amidst its surrounding gardens, in picturesque buildings of various outline, not as a huge and solitary mass. On each side of a large structure which contained the state rooms and banqueting hall, three rows of pavilions of different sizes extended in symmetrical order. These were connected with each other by colonnades, or by little bridges, under which flowed canals that watered the gardens, and gave the palace the aspect of a town upon islands.

The principal part of the palace was built of light Nile-mud bricks and elegantly carved woodwork, but the extensive walls which surrounded it were ornamented and fortified with towers, in front of which heavily armed soldiers stood on guard.

The walls and pillars, the galleries and colonnades, and even the roofs, blazed with many colours, and at every gate rose tall masts, from which red and blue flags streamed

[1] *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 288. The palace described was at Thebes, but it none the less helps us to realize the splendours that surrounded the childhood, youth, and manhood of Moses, till he was forty.

when the king was in residence. Tall brass spikes at their top were intended at once to add to the splendour and to act as lightning conductors. On the right of the principal building, and entirely surrounded with thick plantations of trees, stood the houses of the royal ladies; some mirrored in the lake, round which they stood at a greater or less distance. In this part of the grounds were the king's store houses, in long rows; while behind the central building, in which the Pharaoh resided, stood the treasuries, and the barracks of the body-guard. The left wing was occupied by the officers of the household, and the innumerable servants, and by the royal horses and chariots.

Two rooms of this palace, in the ladies' quarter, are also described by Ebers, from the monuments, and help us to realize the associations that must have been familiar to the early life of Moses. Passing through the gardens in which a hundred gardeners watered the turf, the flower-beds, the shrubs, and the trees, and crossing the quadrangles in which companies of guards came and went, and where horses were being trained and broken, the princess and her maidens, on returning from the river, would be received, as her litter entered the gates, by a lord in waiting, and then led by the chamberlain to her rooms, amidst low bows. One of her chambers commanded the river, to enjoy the beauty of which a doorway, closed with light curtains, opened on a long balcony with a finely worked balustrade, to which clung a climbing rose with pink flowers. The carpets in the room itself were of sky-blue and silver brocade from Damascus; the coverings of the seats and couches had been richly embroidered with feathers by Ethiopian women, and looked like the breasts of birds. The images of the goddess Hathor, which stood on the house altar, were of an imita-

tion of emerald called Mafkat, and other little figures were of lapis-lazuli, malachite, agate, and bronze overlaid with gold. On the toilet table stood a collection of unguent boxes, and cups of ebony and ivory finely carved—everything being arranged with the utmost taste.

The other room was also worthy of such a kingly house. It was high and airy, and its furniture consisted of costly but simple necessaries. The lower part of the wall was lined with cool tiles of white and violet earthenware, on each of which was pictured a star. Above these, the walls were covered with a dark green material brought from Sais, which also covered the long divans skirting them. Chairs and stools, made of cane, stood round a very long table in the middle of the room, out of which several others opened; all handsome, comfortable, and harmonious in aspect. Rare and magnificent plants, artistically arranged on stands, stood in the corners of many of the rooms. In others were tall obelisks of ebony, bearing saucers for incense, which all the Egyptians loved, at once for its perfume and as a disinfectant.[1]

Egyptian Chair.

The garden stretching below the windows was as wonderful as all else. A famous artist had laid it out in the time of Queen Hatasu, and the picture which he had in his mind

[1] *Uarda*, vol. i. pp. 285, 288.

when he sowed the seeds and planted the young shoots, was now realized, many decades after his death. He intended it to form a carpet on which the palace should seem to stand. Tiny streams, in bends and curves, formed the outline of the design, and the shapes they enclosed were filled with plants of every size, form, and colour. Beautiful plats of fresh green turf everywhere represented the groundwork of the pattern, and flower beds and clumps of shrubs stood out from them in harmonious mixture of colours; while tall and rare trees, which Hatasu's ships had brought from Arabia, gave dignity and impressiveness to the whole.[1]

Egyptian Chair.

A few more extracts from the same wonderful restoration of Egyptian life at the time of Moses, bring before us other aspects of the scene amidst which his early life was passed. A grand temporary banqueting hall erected at Avaris or Pelusium, on the frontier wall towards Palestine, when Rameses came back from his wars with the Kheta of Syria, is thus described, in strict accordance with details gathered from the monuments. "It was of unusual height, and had a vaulted ceiling, painted blue and sprinkled with stars, to represent the night heavens. This rested on pillars; some carved in the form of date palms; some, like

[1] *Uarda*, p. 292.

cedars of Lebanon. The leaves and twigs consisted of artfully fastened and coloured tissue: elegant festoons of bluish gauze were stretched from pillar to pillar across the hall, and were attached in the centre of the eastern wall to a large shell-shaped canopy over the throne of the king, decorated with pieces of green and blue glass, mother-of-pearl, shining plates of mica, and other sparkling objects.

"The throne itself had the shape of a buckler, guarded by two lions, which rested on each side of it, and formed the arms; and it was supported on the backs of four Asiatic captives who crouched beneath the weight. Thick carpets, which seem to have transported the seashore to the dry land —for their pale blue was strewn with a variety of shells, fishes, and water-plants—covered the floor of the banqueting hall, in which three hundred seats were placed beside the tables, for the nobles of the kingdom and the officers of the troops. Above all this splendour hung a thousand lamps shaped like tulips and lilies, and in the entrance stood a huge basket of roses, to be strewn before the king when he should arrive.

"Even the bedrooms for the king and his suite were splendidly decorated. Finely embroidered purple stuffs covered the walls, a light cloud of pale blue gauze hung across the ceiling, and giraffe skins were laid, instead of carpets, on the floors. A separate pavilion, gilt and wreathed with flowers, was erected to receive the horses which the king had used in the battle, and which he had dedicated to the Sun-god.

"Crowds of men and women from all parts," of whom Moses may have been one, "had thronged to Pelusium, to welcome the conqueror and his victorious army on their return, and every great temple college had sent a deputation

to meet him. A few only of these wore the modest white robe of the simple priest: most were adorned with the panther skin worn by the prophets. Each bore a staff decorated with roses, lilies, and green branches, and many carried censers in the form of a golden arm, with incense in the hollow of the hand, to be burnt before the king. Among the deputies from the priesthood of Thebes were several women of high rank, who served in the worship of Amon. . . .

"Ere long, the flags were hoisted on the standards beside the triumphal arches, clouds of dust rolled up the farther shore of the Nile, and the blare of trumpets was heard. First came the horses which had carried Rameses through the fight, with the king himself, who drove them. His eyes sparkled with joyful triumph, as the vast multitude on the other side of the bridge hailed him with wild enthusiasm and tears of emotion, strewing in his path the spoils of their gardens—flowers, garlands, and palm branches." . . . The scene at the banquet, at which Moses may have been a guest, was in keeping with all this pomp. "Hundreds of slaves hurried to and fro loaded with costly dishes. Large vessels of richly wrought gold and silver were brought into the hall on wheels, and set on the side-boards. Children, perched in the shells and lotus-flowers that hung from the painted rafters and from between the pillars hung with cloudy, transparent tissues, threw roses and violets down on the company.[1] The sound of harps and songs issued from concealed rooms, and from an altar ten feet high, in the middle of the room, clouds of incense were wafted into space."[2]

No details of the early life of Moses are furnished by the

[1] In the story of Sinehe the Pharaoh is described as having "a pavilion of pure gold." *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. p. 147. [2] *Uarda*, vol. ii. pp. 236-252.

Bible, and the want can only be supplied by the fanciful inventions of tradition. Thus Josephus tells us that he was wonderfully tall when only three years old, and so beautiful that even the common people stopped to look at him as they went by. St. Stephen, indeed, corroborates the statement as to his comeliness, which he describes as uncommon.[1] A short extract from Manetho has likewise been preserved by the Jewish historian, stating that Moses was born at Ou, and that his name was originally Osarsiph, from Osiris, the god of On, but that he changed it into Moses,[2] and that he was a priest of Osiris in the great Sun-temple of his native city, but was turned out of the priesthood for leprosy.[3] Josephus adds that he was appointed general of an Egyptian army, which marched under him against the Ethiopians and won great victories; but all this rests on no authority beyond untrustworthy legend.[4] His training in "all the wisdom of the Egyptians," must have followed as a necessary consequence from his adoption by Thermouthis, which itself incorporated him into the royal family and into the priestly caste. Tradition assigns the great Temple of the Sun at On, the chief university of Egypt, as the scene of his education, and if so his experience of Egyptian life in many striking aspects must have been wide, for the population of the temple and its dependencies was well-nigh that of a small town. Shady cloisters opened into lecture-rooms for the students, and quiet houses for the professors and priests, in their many grades and offices; there being room for all in the corridors of the huge pile. Outside these, but still within the

[1] Acts vii. 20. See also, Heb. xi. 23. [2] *Contra Apion*, I. 26-28. [3] *Ibid.*

[4] The legend of Moses having led an army to Ethiopia may have risen from the title of a Son of Pharaoh having always been Messi, or Massui Prince of Ethiopia. A high official is also called so on a rock-tablet at Assouan. Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, p. 326. Brugsch, vol. ii. p. 530. Lepsius, *Königsbuch*, *J.* 35, No. 469.

precincts, were the cottages of the temple servants, keepers of the beasts, gate-keepers, litter-bearers, water-carriers, washermen, washerwomen, and cooks ; and the rooms of the pastophoroi who prepared the incense and perfumes. The library and writing chambers had their host of scribes, who all lived in the temple buildings, and there were besides, also as members of this huge population, the officials of the counting-house, troops of singers, and, last of all, the noisy multitude of the great temple school—the Eton or Harrow of the time—from which Moses would pass upwards to the lectures of the various faculties of the university.[1]

Clement of Alexandria has fortunately preserved an account of one of the many religious processions, a counterpart to which Moses must often have watched issuing from the gates of this vast sanctuary. It was in honour of Isis. The singers came first, their voices accompanied by instruments. Then followed, carrying a palm branch and his time-measurer, the horoscoper, who predicted the future from the stars ; then the holy scribes, with ink, pens, and a book. The first was required to know by heart thirty-six of the forty-two books of Hermes, with the hymns to the gods, and the rules for the king ; the second, those of the books of Hermes which treated of astrology ; the third, to be an adept at hieroglyphics, geography, the structure of the earth, the phenomena of the Nile, and the details of measures and offerings. After these came the dressers of the god, carrying "the rod of righteousness," and a vessel for the drink-offering. The chief of these was required to be skilled in all that related to the honouring of the idol. Next came the prophets, the foremost bearing a sacred vessel ; others, the holy bread. The chief prophet was the

[1] Ebers, *The Sisters*, vol. ii. pp. 32–34.

president of the temple, and had committed to memory the ten books of the priests. The pastophoroi [1] or sacred physicians followed, clad in their robes like the rest, and honoured as having by heart the six books of medicine; and these were followed by others, with endless display.[2]

In what the "wisdom" in which Moses was trained consisted is not easy to learn, for the priestly scribes in their written allusions to it which are still extant, speak so metaphorically, and hide their meaning so studiously, that it is always more or less uncertain. They held it, indeed, as their exclusive treasure; to be communicated to none outside their circle.[3] The belief in one supreme God seems, however, as is shown in the Book of the Dead, to have been the kernel of these secret doctrines; but the "wisdom" must have included much besides that was lofty and attractive, since the wisest of the Greeks—Lycurgus, Solon, Thales, Pythagoras, Democritus, Plato, and others—borrowed from it many of their principles in politics, geometry, astronomy, and physics. It included, also, moral and even medical precepts, and to these Moses doubtless owed much.[4] For it is striking to notice that the forty-two mortal sins from which the soul had to clear itself before the forty-two judges of the dead, in the next world, as a condition of a happy immortality, embrace nearly the whole Mosaic moral law; presenting in fact, the quintessence of that universal human morality which in all ages has made mankind justly responsible for their conduct, as the "law written in their hearts," making them "by nature" a "law unto themselves."[5] The ibis-headed god Thoth—the scribe of the

[1] See p. 130.
[2] Clemens Alex., *Strom.*, vi. 4.
[3] *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 28.
[4] Uhlemann, p. 59.
[5] Rom. ii. 14, 15. See *Eine Ægypt. Königstochter*, vol. ii. p. 254; vol. iii. p. 271. Lepsius, *Todtenbuch*, p. 125.

gods, known to the Greeks as Hermes Trismegistos, Hermes the thrice greatest—was given out by the priests as having written six books on medicine, which embraced anatomy, pathology, therapeutics, and treatment of diseases of the eye, so common on the Nile. These books, composed by learned priests, would be of great value to a mind of such comprehensive genius as that of Moses. Nor must we forget that it is to Hermes or Thoth that the sublime definition of God is ascribed, as being a circle whose centre is everywhere and the circumference nowhere. The library of the Ramesseum at Thebes—over the gate of which was seen the inscription, "For the healing of the soul"—contained 20,000 books; nor is it without significance, as indicating a period of great intellectual activity, that the structure thus consecrated to knowledge was built by Rameses II. Statues of Thoth, the god of wisdom, and of Safekh, the goddess of history, adorned the entrance, and we still possess some priestly papyrus rolls dated from it. The library is, indeed, often mentioned in Egyptian book-rolls, and the graves of two of its librarians under Rameses II. are yet to be seen at Thebes. The two, it seems, were father and son, and in their life enjoyed the title of "Chief of the Books."[1] Nor was this the only library in the times of Moses. That of Osiris Seb is mentioned in a copy of the Book of the Dead, and there was one belonging to the temple of Ptah at Memphis, in which medical books were included. Another, also, existed later, in the Serapeion at Alexandria. The temples, like our own monasteries in the middle ages, were, in fact, the libraries of the times, and often had valuable collections of books.[2]

It is not probable that Moses permanently maintained

[1] Lepsius, *Chronologie-Einleitung*, p. 39.
[2] *Eine Ægypt. Königstochter*, vol. iii. pp. 273–4.

associations with the royal family, after he had grown to manhood. His absence while at the University of On, if he studied there: the removal of the court to distant Thebes, which took place periodically; and, above all, his sympathy with his own race, must have practically separated him, after a time, from the splendours of the palace. The lowly home of his parents would have more attractions than the halls of his princely benefactress, grateful as he might be to her. That his feelings were intensely national is seen by the one incident recorded, in Exodus, of his Egyptian life. In a sudden access of just indignation at the sight of a native overseer cruelly ill-using an Israelite, he fell on the oppressor and slew him, and as death was the inevitable punishment should the homicide be discovered, he could save his life only by a hasty flight from the country.[1] His guilt, indeed, was exceptionally great, for he had hidden the body and thus hindered embalmment, without which the soul of the slain man would never enter into the Egyptian heaven.

The direction he took was, in all probability, straight for Pelusium or some other town on the line of the great frontier wall, offering escape into the desert beyond. He would breathe freely only when he had left Egypt behind, and even then, no course was open for him but to turn south, and seek refuge in the mountainous peninsula of Sinai. He could not, like Sinehа,[2] hundreds of years before, flee to Southern Palestine, for the Hittite treaty of Rameses

[1] Besides the short rods for the bastinado, the "taskmasters" had long, heavy scourges made of a pliant wood imported from Syria. Chabas, *Voyage d'un Egyptien*, pp. 119, 136. Old Egyptian proverbs tell of the fearful cruelty of these "drivers." Thus, "the child grows up and his bones are broken like the bones of an ass." "The back of a lad is made that he may hearken to him that beats him." Chabas, *Voyage*, p. 136 n. *Papyrus Anast.*, V. viii. 6.

[2] Chabas, *Les Papyrus Hiératiques de Berlin*, pp. 36 51. Maspero, p. 109. *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. p. 135.

had, as we have seen, an extradition clause, by which he would at once have been sent back to the Nile. But we can well fancy that, like him, he suffered not a little on his far longer and more painful journey. "I went on foot," says that fugitive of the age before Abraham, "until I came to the fortress which the king had made to keep off the Eastern foreigners, and an old man, an herbseller, sheltered me. But I was alarmed at the sight of the watchers on the wall, who were changed daily. When the night was passed, however, and the dawn came, I went on from place to place, and arrived at the station of Kamur. But thirst overtook me on my journey, and my throat was so parched that I said, 'This is the taste of death,' till, hearing the pleasant voice of cattle, I lifted up my heart, and braced my limbs. Presently I saw a Bedouin, who asked me whither I journeyed, addressing me as from Egypt. He then gave me water, and poured out milk for me, and I went with him to his tribe, and they brought me on from place to place till I arrived at Atuna."

Moses betook himself, with a wise foresight, to the southern part of the Peninsula of Sinai, a mountainous triangle of more than 120 miles, north and south, from the line of Suez. The north of the peninsula was held by the Amalekites, but the southern portion was the district of a part of the great tribe of Midian, known as the Kenites,[1] and as such descended from Abraham through Keturah. The bond of common race would thus secure the fugitive a hearty reception, and it laid the ground, moreover, for a possible alliance against Egypt, when the Hebrews should make an effort for deliverance. Reaching the headquarters of this people, which were, as usual, near a famous well, he

[1] Judg. i. 16; iv. 11.

received, at once, a friendly welcome from the chief, to whose daughters he had shown a kindly courtesy. The simple manners among which he now found himself breathe of the early patriarchal age. His host was both the sheik and the emir of the tribe—its civil and religious head, bearing as the former the name of Jethro—"the head man"—and as the latter, Raguel—"the friend of God." Marriage to Zipporah—"the little bird"—one of Jethro's daughters, of whom there were seven, soon followed. But the name of the first son of the wanderer shewed that his heart was still on the banks of the Nile, among his oppressed people, for he called him Gershom, in his deep and abiding feeling that he himself was only "a stranger there."

The region in which Moses was to spend many years—that of the Sinai Mountains—was singularly fitted at once to shelter him by its seclusion from the outer world, and to train him by its influences, for the high duties which lay before him. The white limestone of Palestine and of the Wilderness of the Tih stretches into its northern portion. Beyond this, towards the south, come hills of sandstone, usually of only moderate height, but of wonderful variety and splendour of colour, and grotesqueness of shape. These, however, ere long, give way to the mountains of Sinai, which fill up the lower end of the Peninsula—vast masses of primitive rock, rising in their highest summit 9,000 feet above the sea. Memorials of the earliest age of creation, their crystalline masses have remained the same as they are to-day through all the modifications of the surface of the world "Their granite, porphyry, mica schist, and greenstone shafts, pinnacles, and buttresses have towered from the beginning over the ocean, undisturbed by the change from the Silurian age to the Devonian, from the Carboniferous to the Liassic;

from the Oolite to the Chalk."[1] No vegetation covers the bareness of the vast walls of rock, but their colours are so varied and so sharply defined that they seem, notwithstanding, to be veiled in a rich and varied world of plant life. The light-effects, moreover, in the dry pure air and under the deep blue of the sky, have an indescribable power and beauty, in their varying tints, from blinding white to deep violet. To one coming from the rich fields of the Egyptian Delta all this splendour of rock and sky cannot, however, have made up for what he had left behind, and must have seemed desolation. Yet in the days of Moses the whole region was much less barren than now. The destruction of trees age after age, for the use of the miners of ancient Egypt, and for the manufacture of charcoal, which is still carried on, has not only destroyed the forests, but has intensified the sterility of the soil by diminishing the fall of rain. Many a valley which now shows only a few stunted bushes may well have been shaded by woods 3,000 years ago. So late as A.D. 400 an eyewitness tells us that there was great plenty of wood and broom over the whole region—the wood not failing in any part of it.[2] Even to-day there are oases in at least five of the Sinai wadys, and no valley, in the very heart of the mountains, is entirely bare of vegetation. Acacias and tamarisks grow in Wadys Sheik and Gharandel in great numbers, and the palm groves of Wadys Feirân, Kid, Dahab, Noweyba, and Tor yield a rich harvest of fine dates. Broom bushes and other thorny growths, and a great variety of strong-scented plants, especially thyme, nestle in the cracks of the steepest precipices. The broad-leaved colocynth grows in the sandy plains on the border of the wilderness of the Tih, and the bright green

[1] Fraas, *Aus dem Orient*, p. 7. [2] *Durch Gosen*, p. 351.

of the caper plant makes a striking contrast to the dark leaves of the swallow-wort or asclepia, on many a wall of rock. Thousands of goats and sheep find sufficient pasture during the whole year, and many chamois and mountain badgers frequent the almost inaccessible gorges of the heights. Panthers also are met with in these upland valleys. Singing birds enliven the copses by the clear cool springs of the mica schist, and, occasionally, huge flocks of quails, wearied by their long flight from the west, over the Red Sea, settle for the time on the rocky slopes and open plains. Wild ducks, moreover, abound in the small lakes of one or two of the wadys. Nor is the land, alone, thus, in a measure, astir with life. The dugong seal is still, at times, caught in the bays on each side of the peninsula; its thick hide being much prized for sandals to protect the feet from the many acacia thorns in every path. Even with the rude appliances of the Arabs, moreover, the take of fish and mollusks from the neighbouring Red Sea is very large.[1] Snakes, both poisonous and harmless, are numerous in some parts.

But, as a whole, the Sinai Mountains rank among the wildest regions. From a distance they rise, red and gray, in huge masses and peaks of porphyry and granite. On all sides lie heaps of dark ashes of burnt-out volcanic fires, or of fragments of porphyry, red as wax. Walls of rock, with a green shimmer, rise naked and threatening; uncouth, wild crags tower steeply above mounds of black and brown stones, which look as if they had been broken by the hammers of giants. The horizon takes new forms with every short advance, as one closed-in valley rises above another; the sublimity of the landscape increasing with the ascent.

[1] Furrer, *Sinai*, in Schenkel, vol. v. p. 327.

As each new level is reached, the mountains rise in huge heights around, but as the journey leads on to the next plateau they seem to shrink into tameness before the new giants that encircle the way.[1] "Were I a painter," says Ebers, "and could I illustrate Dante's Inferno, I would have pitched my camp-stool here, and have filled my sketch-book, for there could never be wanting to the limner of the dark abyss of the Pit, landscapes savage, terribly, immeasurably sad, unutterably wild, unapproachably grand and awful."[2]

The influence of such a district on a mind like that of Moses must have been great. No region more favourable to the attainment of a lofty conception of the Almighty could have been found. Nature, by the want of water and the poverty of vegetation, is intensely simple, presenting no variety to dissipate and confuse the mind. The grand, sublimely silent mountain world around, with its bold, abrupt masses of granite, greenstone, and porphyry, fills the spirit with a solemn earnestness which the wide horizon from most peaks and the wonderful purity of the air tend to heighten. The wanderer looks down, for example, from the top of Jebel Mûsa, the Mount of Moses, with a shuddering horror, into the abyss below—and round, on the countless pinnacles and peaks, cliffs and precipices, of many-coloured rocks; white and gray, sulphurous yellow, blood red, and ominous black; entirely bare of vegetation. To the north, the desert of the Tih stretches out beyond the mountains in endless perspective. On the east and west the reflection of the blue sea shimmers up from the depths; beyond it, towards sunrising, are seen the pale sands of Arabia; while towards sunset the mountains of Egypt rise half veiled in the blue of distance. Such a place was far more fitted than the

[1] *Durch Gosen*, p. 131. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

narrowly hemmed-in valley of the Nile, or than Palestine, to call forth great thoughts.[1]

In such a desert region we take refuge in our own reflections from the monotony around; the senses are at rest. Undisturbed and uninfluenced from without, the

VIEW FROM THE SUMMIT OF SINAI.
By Permission. From Prof. Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus.*

mind follows out every train of thought to the end, and examines and exhausts every feeling to its finest shades. In a city there is no solitude: each is part of a great whole on which he acts, and by which he is himself affected. But the lonely wanderer in a district like Sinai is absolutely isolated from his fellows, and must fill up

[1] Furrer, *Die Bedeutung der Bib. Geographie für der Bib. Exegese*, p. 5. Ritter, *Erdkunde*, vol. xiv. pp. 3, 544, 548, 584.

the void by his own identity. The present retires into the background, and the spirit, waked to intensity of life, finds no limits to its thoughts. In a lofty spiritual nature like that of Moses, the solemn stillness of the mountains and the boundless sweep of the daily and nightly heavens would efface the thought of man, and fill the soul with the majesty of God. As he meditated on the possible deliverance of his people, the lonely vastness would raise him above anxious contrasts of their weakness compared with the power of Egypt, which might have paralyzed resolution and bidden hope despair. What was man, whose days were a hand-breadth, and whose foundation was in the dust, before the mighty Creator of Heaven and Earth—the Rock of Israel ?[1] Even less lofty spirits than his had, indeed, been kindled, age after age, to a nearer sense of the presence of God, amidst these magnificent and awful solitudes ; for Serbal had been from the earliest times sacred to the worship of Baal, and, even still, the wandering Bedouin sacrifices lambs within stone circles raised on it, as thank-offerings for any special blessing received.[2] So, Horeb already bore the name of "the Mount of God" when Moses came to live near it,[3] and the whole group of mountains, like Ararat or the Himalaya, were holy among the tribes around.[4]

In this sanctuary of the hills, awaiting the time when the advancing purposes of God had ripened Israel for the great movement of its deliverance, and, meanwhile, unconsciously preparing for the mighty task before him, Moses spent, as St. Stephen informs us, no fewer than forty years.[5] His wanderings would make him acquainted with every valley,

[1] Geikie's *Life and Words of Christ*, vol. i. p. 382.
[2] Sepp, *Jerusalem u. das Heilige Land*, vol. ii. p. 776.
[3] Exod. iv. 27.
[4] Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 63.
[5] Acts vii. 30.

plain, gorge, hill, and mountain of the whole region; with its population, whether native, or that of the Egyptian mines; with every spring and well, and with all the resources of every kind offered by any spot: an education of supreme importance towards fitting him to guide his race, when rescued from Egypt, to the safe shelter and holy sanctuaries of this predestined scene of their long encampment. Still more, in those calm years every problem to be solved in the organization of a people would rise successively in his mind and find its solution; and above all, his own soul must have been disciplined and purified, by isolation from the world and closer and more continual communion with God.[1]

[1] Bertheau thinks that Moses in Midian would come in contact with a form of the faith of Abraham, preserved in Jethro's tribes, purer than survived among the Jews in Egypt. *Geschichte*, p. 242.

CHAPTER V.

THE PLAGUES OF EGYPT.

THE long interval during which Moses lived in Midian as a humble shepherd, must have been one of ripening progress towards future deliverance on the part of the Hebrews on the Nile. Parents whose home training had resulted in a family like Miriam, Aaron, and Moses—true to the God of their fathers, and, as such, filled with an intense aversion to the religion of Egypt—could not have been the only instances of a hereditary loyalty to the faith and aspirations of Israel. Doubtless Amram and Jochebed bore in their names [1] the proud assertion of a creed cherished by not a few of their race besides, even in these dark times. There had been, it may well be believed, too much indifference to the memories of Bethel and Beersheba; but trouble had quickened the religious feelings of the nation, and given a value, which had not latterly been assigned them, to the promises made by Jehovah to Abraham and his descendants.[2] This great spiritual revolution was brought about, so far as can now be seen, through the agency of the tribe of Levi, to which the parents of Moses belonged, and their children lived to be its chief promoters. But Amram and Jochebed doubtless received from others of a former generation, the Puritan impulse which their family was destined to spread so widely and to conduct to such triumphant

[1] Gesenius, 8th ed. See *ante*, p. 117. [2] Exod. ii. 23.

results. That their tribe should hereafter be honoured with the national priesthood was, therefore, its natural inheritance. It was through it, in Egypt, that its brethren turned again to Jehovah, and it was by the efforts of its sons, Aaron and Moses, that they became a people. Pioneers, in Egypt, of national revival, religious and political, perhaps for generations, the tribe of Levi was designated from the first, alike by its past services and its special fitness, for the dignity ultimately assigned to it.

Aaron was doubtless the chief agent in this great work, but he would have the assistance of the "elders" of the people; that is, of the heads or "princes" of tribes, of clans, of sub-clans, and of households, in spreading his influence through the whole population. To do so, however, with any aid, would be no easy task; for the masses are slow to rouse to spiritual ideas, especially when crushed by a hard life. Yet it was essential they should be thus quickened. To free them in a merely physical sense would have left them unfitted for their high destiny as the People of God. The foundation of a permanent and earnest recognition of Jehovah as their national God, demanded that the contrast between the true and the false should be brought home to them and burnt into their hearts, while they were still surrounded by Egyptian idolatry, and aglow with enthusiasm against its votaries, as their oppressors. Nor is it without significance that the Greek Bible speaks of God as gradually "becoming known to them."[1] The Hebrew overseers in charge of each gang of their brethren, under the Egyptian taskmasters, doubtless shewed them a sympathy which extended beyond their physical sufferings;

[1] The words, ch. ii. 25, "God had respect unto them," are, in the Septuagint, "God became known unto them."

for these overseers or "officers" [1] are elsewhere identified with the "elders," who were in close communication with Aaron.[2] The heads of each clan or sub-clan were evidently made responsible for the behaviour of those connected with them, and tribal communication was thus intimately maintained. That Aaron should have gone to Sinai to meet his brother Moses speaks, moreover, of his work being at last ripe for great results, and of a correspondence having been maintained between the two through the years of their separation; if only by messages carried by traders passing through Jethro's district.

The preparation of Moses for his great task must, like that for all high aims and spheres, have been gradual and slow. To feel one's self summoned to play the part of a prophet of God implies an elevation, an enthusiasm, and a concentration of soul only attained by degrees. The outward duties of such an office must indeed be the spontaneous expression of profound personal conviction, rising above all doubt and question where others hesitate most, and this is necessarily slowly reached. Every utterance of the prophetic impulse ultimately exhibited by Moses, implies that the existence and continual presence of God, as the supreme directing and controlling force in all human affairs, must have been realized by him with an overpowering vividness, carrying with it his whole nature. It may be that his flight,

[1] Exod. v. 6, 14, 19. The word is shoterim. Even the seventy elders are so called, Num. xi. 16. So are, afterwards, the heads of the different sections of the tribes, in the march through the wilderness. Deut. xx. 9; xxix. 9; xxxi. 28. Josh. i. 10; iii. 2; viii. 33; xxiii. 2; xxiv. 1. The municipal dignitaries of the towns of Israel also bore, in after days, this name. Deut. xvi. 18. 1 Chron. xxiii. 4; xxvi. 29. The shoterim seem to have had charge of the genealogical records of the tribes.

[2] Exod. iv. 29. It is noteworthy that Pharaoh complains of the people "listening to lying talk," about going off to sacrifice in the wilderness. This shows that their leaders had access to them, and we may feel sure that they had long used this privilege to quicken them to worthy thoughts. See Exod. v. 9.

after killing the Egyptian taskmaster, was the first step towards this lofty inspiration, by breaking off every tie with Egypt, and committing him unreservedly to the cause of his people. For, though his heart had always been theirs, even amidst the learned seclusion of the temple cloisters at On, or the splendours of the palace at Tanis—and though he had often stolen away to mingle with those whom he loved as "his brethren," and to sympathize with them in their "burdens"—his flight must have first set him free from an embarrassing position, and left him wholly at their service.

The prophet, in the true meaning of the word, is the mouth of God among men, whether in respect to the present or the future. Prediction is only one form of the Divine communications he announces. To proclaim the present purposes and will of God is his main commission. But to rise to a condition of mind in which he thus becomes the articulate voice of the Eternal to his fellow-men must come by a natural advance. Before the spirit can thus be filled with the Divine, like a lamp with light, it must have been long concentrated on it to a degree unknown to other men. Earth must well-nigh have disappeared, before the heavens thus open as the familiar home of the thoughts. The Unseen must have become the great reality, before which the visible and temporal rank as infinitely subordinate. In this sense Moses was, at once, the first and the greatest of the prophets, for no one before Christ has spoken in the name of God with such commanding majesty, or shed such a flood of light on the Divine nature and laws. All future prophets draw their light from his central splendour, for he established in the hearts of his race the great truths which his successors had but to press home on their contemporaries.

The burning bush of Horeb was, indeed, only a symbol of the sacred fire which glowed through his being, and kindled in the world, unextinguishably, the light of the true religion. But what long wrestlings of soul; what ponderings over the mysteries of nature as seen around and above him; what mental struggles with the teachings of his Egyptian masters; what contrasts of the gods of the Nile valley in all their higher and lower aspects, with the traditional faith in the One living and true God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, must have passed through his soul, before Jehovah stood out alone, supreme, universal, as the holy Lord God of heaven and earth! To think one's way, even with all supernatural aids, to such a stupendous conclusion, in the clearness and intensity with which it rose before him, sets him apart among men; for the God of Moses, though also the God of Abraham, is revealed with infinitely fuller circumstance, in His relations to mankind and in the disclosures of His own Being. Revelation doubtless poured into his soul the light by which it realized such truths, but his whole nature must have strained towards that light with a grand earnestness, to have been fitted for such communications. In spiritual things, it is ever to those only who have, that more can be given.

Apart from this concentrated Divine enthusiasm, however, raising him slowly, through years, to the conviction that he was called to be a prophet to his people, and to speak to them, as such, for God; the vast task before Moses demanded the intellect of a statesman, a legislator, and an organizer on a grand scale, and it was the union of these with his supreme authority as the recognized mouthpiece of God, that qualified him supremely for his great work.

It was in the wilderness of Sinai, the Bible tells us, amidst the mountains of Horeb—"the dry," a name for the vast heights of the Sinai group as a whole—while he was feeding the flocks of his father-in-law, that Moses was first honoured with the Divine communication which transformed him, henceforth, in his whole nature, by bringing to a crisis the inarticulate dreams and spiritual aspirations of the past. Tradition has fixed the spot, since the sixth century, in the deep seclusion to which he afterwards led the children of Israel, and the convent of Justinian is built over what is held to have been the very spot where he was commanded to put the sandals from off his feet. But whether this "valley of Jethro," or the plain at Mount Serbal, was the scene of the event, the circumstances around were equally fitting. The awful majesty of the hills, which, as Josephus tells us,[1] had already invested them with a special sacredness in the eyes of the Arab tribes as "the Mountains of God," looked down on the wanderer from every side. He had followed his flocks of sheep and goats as they sought the aromatic shrubs on the ledges of the rock, or in the folds of the narrow valleys, or by the side of chance springs; little thinking to what they were leading him. The wild acacia, the sench of the Hebrew Bible—a gnarled and thorny tree, not unlike our solitary hawthorn in its growth[2]—dotted the bare slopes and the burning soil of the ravines. But now, suddenly, a glow of flame, like that which was consuming Israel in the furnace of affliction, shines forth amidst the dry branches of one of these before him, and yet, as he gazes, "the bush," though "it burned with fire," was not consumed. Drawing near to "see this great sight," a voice which he instinctively recognizes as

[1] *Ant.*, II. xii. 1.

[2] Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 391.

Divine sounds from its midst, commanding him to remove his sandals, as on holy ground;[1] revealing new and closer relations of God to His chosen people, and imposing on the awed shepherd a unique commission as His prophet. He had been known to their forefathers, and was known to themselves, by names more or less used by related peoples, in speaking of their gods—the names El, or Elohim, or Shaddai—"the mighty One." The worship of Jehovah, indeed, was generally diffused through Assyrian and Western Asia at an early date; for, as far back as B.C. 822, the names of Assyrian officials are in part made up, like so many Jewish names, by incorporating part of it. Even in B.C. 887, the name Abijah occurs on the Euphrates as an Assyrian name, and in the time of Sargon, the destroyer of Samaria in B.C. 721, *Ian*bidi was king of Hamath, on the Orontes; *Jo*ram was king of Edom; Zedek*iah*, king of Ascalon, and Pad*iah*, king of Ekron. There is, moreover, a Joel in a Phœnician text from Malta. The name Jehovah was, indeed, common, at least as early as the tenth century before Christ, to all Semitic peoples of Western Asia as far east as Nineveh. The Hebrews themselves had, in fact, also used the name, as we see in that of *Jo*chebed, the mother of Moses, but its wide import had never been fully revealed to them.[2] Henceforth, the gulf between the true God and the idols of Egypt and of the nations, should be marked by the adoption of the name Jehovah in its full significance, as expressive of the One only Living God—the true "I AM WHOM I AM," the mysterious Fountain of all Being. "Go

[1] "Our habit of respect is to take off the hat: theirs, to take off their shoes. Consequently, they never enter their places of worship, or generally their own rooms, without taking them off and leaving them at the doors." Mill's *Samaritans*, pp. 107, 225.

[2] Oehler, in Herzog, vol. vi. p. 460.

to your brethren, the children of Israel," continued the Divine voice, "and say to them, 'Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you. This shall be My name for ever: so shall you call Me for ever and ever.'"[1] All other gods were mere Elilim[2]—"nothings"—had no existence, but were only inventions of man. He alone, by the very name Jehovah, proclaimed Himself as the One Living God. Moses was to tell his brethren that this mighty Being—mindful of His covenant with Abraham—was about to deliver them from oppression, and gather them beneath the mountains where the Voice then spoke, that He might give them their future laws as His people, and afterwards lead them to the good land which He had promised to their fathers.

Instinctively shrinking from an office at once so lofty and so difficult, Moses naturally craves special assurances of God's presence with him, before he can face the majesty of Pharaoh, or hope to rouse the apathy of a down-trodden race. But these, also, are given him. Overpowered with the vision, and yet divinely exalted in soul; shrinking in humility as he thinks of himself, but strong in a holy trust as he remembers Jehovah, he turns back to his flocks another man. Henceforth, he is in the fullest sense inspired, and rises to the height of the great enterprise committed to him. If he be slow of speech, has not Jehovah said that Aaron would speak for him to Pharaoh and to the people; he him-

[1] Gesenius, *Lex.*, 8th edition, art. "Zächer," p. 239. It is striking how this supreme name of God had its echoes in other nations than Israel - perhaps from the first age of innocence. Iaō was at times the name assigned by the Greeks to the highest God (Macrob., *Saturn.*, i. 18). The Chaldæans spoke of Iaō, and the Ichthyophagi are said to have used the name Iaō Sabaoth, as a charm or spell in their fishing. See Knobel's *Exodus*, p. 29. Perhaps these nations borrowed the name from the Hebrews.

[2] Ps. xcvi. 5.

self acting, through him, as the representative of God? It would thus be his to indicate: Aaron would put his instructions in fitting words. To himself it was vouchsafed to stand to the people in the place of God; to Aaron he would be as God is to a prophet whom he inspires.[1] Did he wish a symbol of his high office? Had not the shepherd's rod in his hand been already made the instrument of Divine power? His task was to be performed by no mere human aid. Had he been required to front the majesty of Egypt by raising an insurrection and trusting to military success, he might well have despaired; for how could the multitudes of an enslaved population win the day against disciplined armies? But the peaceful symbol he bore—the staff with which he had guided his kinsman's flocks—spoke, as the wonders he had already seen wrought by it showed, of an invisible Power before whom the might of the Pharaohs availed nothing. In the modest humility of such an emblem he could go forward, assured that Jehovah who had sent him would also fight the battle for Israel.[2] For, had not this simple rod, at the

[1] Knobel's *Prophetismus*, vol. i. p. 104. Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 86.

[2] The incident of the circumcision of Gershom, the son of Moses, at the caravanserai, on the way to Egypt, is striking. Moses had neglected to perform the rite and was suddenly struck by severe illness, which he traced to this oversight of his duty. Zipporah, learning the fact, forthwith circumcises the child, and Moses presently recovers; on which Zipporah tells him that she has won him again for her bridegroom by the child's blood; that his life is spared on account of it, and she has him as it were, given to her anew—now this duty is fulfilled. Exod. iv. 24–27. That the "sons" of Moses should be set on an ass, implies that they were of tender years, so that his marriage must have taken place long after his going to Midian, or the birth of his children must have been long delayed. Herodotus says that the Arabs were wont to confirm covenants by cutting their middle finger with a sharp stone (iii. 8). In the case of Moses it was fitting that the covenant made with Abraham, and now virtually renewed with himself, should be solemnized by the sign divinely appointed at its first institution. But it marks strikingly the extent to which the patriarchal faith had passed from the common Hebrew mind, that even Moses should have neglected to circumcise his children. Gesenius quotes with approval the statement of some Jewish expositors, that a mother called her son "spouse" when he was circumcised. *Thesaurus*, p. 539.

bidding of God, turned to an angry serpent, the symbol of death, and had not the hand that held it been alternately withered and restored by the same Voice? Had not the vision of the burning bush shown that though thorns could not of themselves resist the shining flames, but were, rather, the very thing that would most easily fall a prey to them, a Power was at hand who protected even what was so frail? Israel might be unable in itself to oppose Egypt, but its Redeemer was mighty. As God was in the flame of the bush and hindered its consuming that in which it glowed, so He was with His people in their trials, and would keep them from being destroyed. They would be saved, not by the skill or intellect of any leader, but only by the power and loving-kindness of Jehovah Himself. Their deliverance should be so clearly His work alone, that they would in all future ages see in it a pledge of His having divinely chosen them for His own, and of His tender love and pity towards them.[1]

The meeting of Aaron with his brother must have filled both hearts with joy and confidence in God, for if Moses had to speak of heavenly encouragement in their great enterprise, so had Aaron. He had to report, besides, that the Hebrews, their brethren, were at last, after long years, roused once more to an enthusiasm for the religion of their fathers, which insured their co-operation in any plan for speedy deliverance from the burden of Egyptian slavery, and the hated presence of Egyptian idolatry. Nor was it necessary to wait any length of time for the proof of this. All the elders of Israel being summoned and told of the approaching crisis, the tidings soon spread through every division of the tribes, and were received with universal joy. The elders

[1] Köhler's *Lehrbuch der Bib.-Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 174.

indeed could report that "the people believed, and rejoiced that Jehovah had visited them" through His chosen messengers, and that they had bowed their heads and worshipped.[1]

The struggle which had now come to a head between Israel and Egypt, was at once a revolt of slaves against their masters and the conflict of one religion with another. The Pharaoh had aimed at destroying the nationality of the Hebrews and incorporating them with the general population, but this involved their accepting Egyptian idolatry. Israel had, however, clung with a desperate tenacity to the faith of their race, and craved leave to perform the sacrifices it demanded. But these required the slaughter of rams and oxen—the former sacred to Amon ; the latter the symbol of Osiris and Isis—and to kill animals thus sacred, would have roused the whole nation to exterminate a people guilty of such impiety. It was inevitable that if these sacrifices were to be offered at all, the Hebrews must be allowed to go outside the bounds of the kingdom.

Demanding an audience, therefore, from Pharaoh, Moses and Aaron requested that their brethren should be permitted to go a three-days' journey to the wilderness, and there hold a solemn religious festival to their God.[2] The refusal of a proposal so fair and moderate would at once justify their obtaining for themselves this natural right, and with it their personal freedom, by any worthy means that offered.

The Pharaoh who now reigned was Menephtah II., the thirteenth son of Rameses II., who had died after reigning well-nigh seventy years, leaving many survivors of his

[1] Exod. iv. 31. Septuagint and Knobel.

[2] The Egyptians had their own religious pilgrimages and sacrificial festivals, at Bubastis, Busiris, Sais, Heliopolis, Boutos, and Papremis. Herod., ii. 59. See also Vaihinger, *Studien u. Kritiken*, 1872, p. 374.

immense family of 170 children.[1] Menephtah was already a man of about sixty when he ascended the throne, and he held his court habitually in Lower Egypt; at Memphis, On, and Tanis or Zoan,[2] where monuments bearing his name still exist, thus corroborating the statement of the Bible, that it was at Zoan Moses encountered him.[3] The date of his accession is said to have been B.C. 1325, but it is hard to reconcile this with the accepted dates of earlier and subsequent events.

From the time of Seti I., the grandfather of Menephtah, the people of Libya had threatened the western frontier of Egypt, but the vigour of Rameses II. had driven them back, and held them in check while he lived. After his death, however, things changed. A great alliance was formed by the Libyans with the Greeks—of whom this is the first historical mention known—the Sicilians, the Etruscans, the Sardinians, and the Lycians; and Egypt was invaded from the north, by sea and land. In such a time the persecution of the Hebrews must have been suspended, for it would have been madness to have tempted them, by ill-treatment, to join the invaders, who were finally driven off after "days and months," leaving the unusual number of 9,376 prisoners in the hands of Menephtah.[4] Mounds of hands and dismembered limbs laid at his feet attested the ferocity of the Egyptian troops, especially the cavalry, of whom Menephtah particularly boasts. But besides these, there were more

[1] Lenormant's *Manuel*, vol. i. p. 423. Birch's *Ancient Egypt from the Monuments*, p. 133. Ebers, in Riehm, p. 333. Maspero, p. 258. De Rougé, *Examen Critique de l'Ouvrage de M. le Chevalier de Bunsen*, 2d partie, p. 74.

[2] Chabas, *Recherches sur la XIX^e^ Dynastie*, pp. 79, 80. Chabas, *Mélanges Égyptologiques*, 3d series, vol. ii. pp. 117, 161.

[3] Ps. lxxviii. 12, 43.

[4] Inscription at Karnak translated in *Records of the Past*, vol. iv. 37–48; also by De Rougé in the *Revue Archæologique*, 1867, p. 167; and by Chabas, *Études de l'Antiquité Historique*, Paris, 1870 73. Ebers, *Ægypten und die Bücher Moses'*, p. 154.

valuable spoils: multitudes of horses and oxen, over 9,000 copper swords, 1,308 bulls, many goats, 54 gold vases, a number of silver drinking cups, and more than 3,000 of other materials; coats of mail, skin tents, and much else.

Peace once more established, the oppression of the Hebrews recommenced with additional severity; perhaps from the doubtful attitude taken by them during the invasion; but, it may be, only from the natural fear that a people so numerous, so vigorous, so distinct from the Egyptians, and so fiercely opposed to the national religion, should hereafter give trouble if fresh complications arose. Among other precautions, Menephtah, like his father, took up his residence, usually, at Memphis or at Tanis-Zoan, whence he could most easily dominate the alien populations of the Delta, and stand, as it were, on guard, at the entrance of Egypt, against invasion from Syria or Arabia. An allusion occurs, in the inscription which records the great Libyan inroad, to the condition of these parts after peace had been restored, and also in the old Hyksos days. On[1] or Heliopolis and Memphis were additionally fortified; other places which had been ruined were rebuilt, and lines of defence were thrown up at weak parts; perhaps in part as measures of repression towards the Hebrews. Then follows a glance at the condition of the Delta and Lower Egypt, generally, in the old Hyksos times, and since. "Never was the like devastation seen as in the invasion of the Libyans and their allies—not even in the times of the kings of Lower Egypt, when the land lay in the hand of the enemy, and misery reigned—in the times when the kings of Upper Egypt could not drive the invaders out. (In the Libyan invasion) the open lands

[1] The Septuagint adds the name of On to those of Pithom and Rameses, as a city on which the Hebrews performed forced labour.

were left untilled, as pasture for cattle, because of the barbarians. These parts had been infested from the times of our ancestors, when the kings of Upper Egypt lay in their tombs, and when those of Lower Egypt, in the midst of their towns, were surrounded by dwellings of corruption.[1] Their troops had not auxiliaries enough to enable them to act efficiently."[2] The Delta was still, as in the past, the weak point of Egypt, from the large foreign element in its population, holding close relations to the inexhaustible hostile regions outside. The whole position of affairs, after the expulsion of the Libyans and their European and Asiatic allies, might naturally suggest the sternest measures towards the already dangerously numerous Hebrews.

Tanis, the scene of the plagues by which Pharaoh was at last compelled to yield to the demands of Moses, has been already described.[3] Fortunately, we have on one of the walls of the great temple of Karnak, a plan of its ruins made in the time of Seti I., grandfather of Menephtah, before it had been rebuilt and beautified by Rameses II. The Tanis branch of the Nile flows through the town and its suburbs, and is crossed by a bridge. In the water are crocodiles and aquatic plants. The sea, not far off, is also represented, with its fish ;[4] for in the Hyksos days the ships of Palestine and other countries could sail up to the wharves of Tanis, as they again were in the time of Rameses II., though the canal which now represents the river is only navigable for the fisher-boats from Lake Menzaleh, which did not then exist.

[1] An alien population.

[2] *Records of the Past*, vol. iv. p. 41. Ebers, *Ægypten*, p. 207. Vigouroux, vol. ii. p. 248. Chabas, *Récherches*, p. 94.

[3] Page 29.

[4] Brugsch, *Inscript. Geog.*, I. pl. 48. *La Sortie des Hébreux d'Egypte*, Conférence. Alexandrie, 1874, p. 20.

Menephtah was about twenty years younger than Moses, and had doubtless heard of his early life in the palace, and of his subsequent flight and its cause. Time, however, had long effaced these recollections, for even the flight had happened forty years before. But to make any impression on a Pharaoh, in favour of despised slaves, needed more than words, however reasonable or weighty. Menephtah had been taught to regard his lightest fancy as the law which all must obey. That he should be required to do the least trifle against his pleasure was inconceivable. Court laureates had addressed him in odes, one of which, still preserved, is doubtless a sample of many. He was, they told him, "the lover of truth," "the sun in the great heaven, enlightening the earth with his goodness, and chasing the darkness from Egypt."

"Thou art, as it were, the image of thy father, the Sun
Who rises in heaven. . . . No place is without thy goodness.
Thy sayings are the law of every land. . . .
Bright is thy eye above the stars of heaven : able to gaze at
The sun. Whatever is spoken, even in secret, ascends to
Thine ears. Whatever is done in secret, thy eye sees it,
O! Baeura Meriamen,[1] merciful Lord, creator of breath!"[2]

The first approaches of Moses and Aaron to this man-god, on behalf of their people, the despised beings by whose labour he was executing the public works of the district, only drew down on the sufferers a heavier lot. Hitherto they had been allowed tebben, the broken straw of the thresh-

[1] A name of Menephtah II. The expression of belief that he was the true living representative of Deity on earth was doubtless sincere, for all men in Egypt, as has been already said, worshipped the Pharaoh as the incarnate Sun-god. Proofs of this are met with constantly.

[2] *Papyrus Anastasi*, translated by Chabas, *Mélanges Égyptologiques*, 1870, p. 117, and by Mr. Goodwin, *Trans. Soc. Bib. Arch.*, vol. ii. p. 353. *Records of the Past*, vol. vi. p. 101.

ing floor, to use in binding the clay they had to make into bricks ; but now they were to get it where they could, from the fields far and near ; the same number of bricks as before being still demanded from them.[1] It must have been some time about the end of April ; for the wheat harvest is then just over in Egypt and leaves the plains of the Delta covered with standing straw—soon to be gathered and torn or trampled to pieces for fodder : the reapers in Ancient as in Modern Egypt cutting off the grain close to the ear. The Nile would be at its lowest, and the hot sand wind from the Sahara would have begun to blow, as it does for fifty days together at that season, making the heat almost unendurable. But the Hebrews had to face it, and waste their strength and lives on their impossible task.[2] The burden had become intolerable, but deliverance was at hand.

The signs and plagues by which Menephtah was in the end compelled to let the Hebrews go, began, we are told, with a repetition of the wonder that had already been wrought at Horeb—the turning a rod into a serpent : a miracle imitated, however, by the "magicians of Egypt."[3] The great lesson of all these manifestations—the superiority of Jehovah to the idols of Egypt—was in none, however, more vividly shown than in this, by "Aaron's rod swallowing up" all the others.[4]

The jugglers and magicians of the East have in every age exhibited feats of skill, or of unholy powers, which startle the senses and seem to defy explanation. Egypt especially was the land of "the black art," which indeed got that name from the dark colour of the soil of the Nile valley.[5]

[1] Exod. v. 15 ff. [2] Osburn, *Israel in Egypt*, p. 252. [3] Exod. vii. 11.
[4] All official Egyptians carried rods in their hands, as indications of their rank, etc.
[5] Alchemy means "pretended science," and is derived from Kemia = black—the native name of Egypt. Hence it was "the black art."

Exodus supplies us with the names of some classes of its wonder-workers—the Hakamim, or wise men, who specially dealt in secret arts ; the Mĕkashphim, who muttered magic spells and adjurations for driving away spirits, or the more tangible dangers of crocodiles, asps, snakes, and the like ;[1] and the Hartummim, who were, as Brugsch tells us, the high priests, presiding at the different religious services in the very city of Zoan-Tanis, where Moses and Aaron wrought their miracles. Their name means, we are told, "the warriors," in allusion to the myths of conflicts of the gods, so common in Egypt.[2] This class were perhaps, equivalent to "the sacred scribes,"[3] and appear to have been at once the literary men of their temples, and skilled in uttering spells by the use of sacred names and words.[4] In this relation they were the "scribes of occult writings," and formed, with the other classes named, the council of the Pharaoh, to consult the magic books for him, when summoned. The names of the two chief opponents of Moses and Aaron, Jannes and Jambres, have been preserved by St. Paul,[5] and are both Egyptian ; An or Annu, which is identical with "scribe," being frequently found in writings of the date of Moses, while Jambres is the name of a sacred book, and may mean "Scribe of the South."[6] Buxtorff gives some of the traditions of the later Jews respecting them, under the names of Jochanna and Mamre. They were said to have been sons of Balaam, and to have perished with Pharaoh in the Red Sea, but it is idle to repeat such inventions at any length.[7]

[1] See references in the *Book of the Dead*.

[2] Brugsch, *The Exodus and the Egyptian Monuments*, *Trans. Orient. Congress*. London, 1874, p. 273. Dillmann (*Exodus*, p. 68) rejects this etymology.

[3] Ebers, *Ægypten*, etc., p. 341.

[4] *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. p. 279.

[5] 2 Tim. iii. 8.

[6] *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. p. 279.

[7] Buxtorff's *Lex. Ch. et Tal.*, pp. 948-9. Rosenmüller, *Das Alte u. Neue Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 275.

Like all the other "signs" and plagues, that of the rod turned into a serpent was a direct challenge from Jehovah to the idols of Egypt; for serpents were worshipped in various parts of the country,[1] and the living symbol of the god of Pithom, in the Hebrew district, was one of these creatures, dignified with the name of "the Magnificent," and "the Splendid."[2] The asp was also the symbol of the god Kneph—the creator and sustainer of the world,[3] and Serapis was frequently represented with a serpent's body.[4] To discredit this reptile, therefore, at once dishonoured a multitude of Egyptian gods, for their utter impotence as compared with Jehovah could have had no more signal illustration, than the vanishing of all the rods of the magicians before that of Aaron.

How the feats narrated of these wonder-workers were performed it is impossible to tell, but it is certain that, in both ancient and modern times, conjurers in the East have boasted of amazing power over serpents. An African race, the Psylli, were believed to be proof against their bites, handling them recklessly, in reliance on the protection of spells and incantations. Throwing them into a helpless lethargy, they then played with them as mock rods or staves.[5] Even at this day Egyptian jugglers are accustomed to catch a serpent by the head, and by some strange

[1] Herod., ii. 74. Eusebius speaks of two serpents worshipped at Thebes, as the greatest of all the gods.

[2] Brugsch, *The Exodus and the Egyptian Monuments*, p. 269.

[3] Creuzer's *Symbolik*, p. 166.

[4] Winer, *Schlange*. Lane, in his *Modern Egyptians*, states that each quarter of Cairo has a special guardian genius, in the form of a serpent. This is no doubt a relic of ancient serpent worship. Every visitor to this wonderful city must have seen the serpent charmers, who have their performing cobras, carried about by them in baskets, and taken out for the amusement of the foreigners at the hotels, to go through their dancing motions on the pavement.

[5] See authorities in Knobel's *Exodus*, p. 61. Dillmann, p. 69

power make it stiff and motionless, as if changed into a rod.[1]

The second "sign" and first "plague"—the turning the waters of Egypt into blood—was a blow at the whole religion of Egypt, than which none could have been more impressive, whether to the Egyptians or Hebrews. The Nile was, in the strictest sense, regarded as divine, and was worshipped under a variety of names. A hymn as old as the days of Moses, still preserved, shows how deeply this reverence had taken hold of the Egyptian mind.[2]

"Hail to thee, O Nile!
Thou who hast revealed thyself to this land,
Coming in peace, to give life to Egypt!
Hidden god! who bringest what is dark to light,
As is always thy delight!
Thou who waterest the fields created by the Sun-god;
To give life to all the world of living things.
Thou it is who coverest all the land with water.
Thy path, as thou comest, is from heaven!
Thou art the god Set, the friend of bread!
Thou art the god Nepra, the giver of grain!
Thou art the god Ptah, who lightenest every dwelling!
Lord of Fishes, when thou risest over the flooded lands
Thou protectest the fields from the birds.
Creator of wheat: Producer of barley;
Thou sustainest the temples.
When the hands of millions of the wretched are idle, he grieves.
If he do not rise, the gods in heaven fall on their faces, and men die.

[1] Champollion-Figeac, *Égypten*, p. 26. On serpent charming in Egypt, see *Eine Ægypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 236. In the *Description de l'Égypte*, vol. xxiv. p. 82, it is said, "They can turn the Kajé (a serpent) *into a stick* and make it appear dead. They then revive it, when they choose, holding it by the tail and rolling it briskly between their hands." See also, for extraordinary feats performed with poisonous snakes, Drummond Hay's *Western Barbary*, p. 64. Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of Bible*, p. 272.

[2] *Papyrus Sallier*, l. 11-13. *Anastasi*, VII. It is translated by Canon Cook, *Records of the Past*, pp. 4, 105. Dümichen, *Gesch. des Alten Ägyptens*, p. 11. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, p. 11. The two latter translations are wonderfully alike, but both differ considerably from that of Canon Cook.

He makes the whole land open before the plough of the oxen,
And great and small rejoice.
Men invoke him when he delays his coming,
And then he appears as the life-giving god Khnoum.
When he rises the land is filled with gladness,
Every mouth rejoices: all living things have nourishment: all teeth their food.

Bringer of Food! Creator of all good things!
Lord of all things choice and delightful,
If there be offerings, it is thanks to thee!
He maketh grass to grow for the oxen;
He prepares sacrifices for every god,
The choice incense is that which he supplies!
He cannot be brought into the sanctuaries,
His abode is not known;
There is no house that can contain him!
There is no one who is his counsellor!
He wipes away tears from all eyes!

* * * * * * *

O Nile, hymns are sung to thee on the harp;
Offerings are made to thee: oxen are slain to thee;
Great festivals are kept for thee: fowls are sacrificed to thee:
Incense ascends unto heaven:
Oxen, bulls, fowls, are burned!
Mortals, extol him! and ye cycle of gods!
His Son (the Pharaoh) is made Lord of all,
To enlighten all Egypt.
Shine forth, shine forth, O Nile, shine forth!"

As the bountiful Osiris,[1] and under many other divine names, the Nile was the beneficent god of Egypt—the representative of all that was good. Evil, however, had also its god, the deadly enemy of Osiris—the hated Typhon—the source of all that was cruel, violent, and wicked. With this abhorred being the touch or sight of blood was associated. He himself was represented as blood-red; red oxen and even red-haired men were sacrificed to him, and blood, as his

[1] Creuzer, *Symbolik*, p. 89.

symbol, rendered all unclean who came near it. To turn the Nile waters into blood was thus to defile the sacred river —to make Typhon triumph over Osiris—and to dishonour the religion of the land in one of its supremest expressions.

The law of Divine government by which, even when miraculous results are to be produced, natural phenomena are utilized as far as they go, has led to many attempts to explain the change effected on the waters of Egypt, as caused by a special employment of ordinary means. Thus it is known that the Nile at a certain stage of its yearly rise assumes a red colour. "The sun," says Mr. Osburn, "was just rising over the Arabian hills, and I was surprised to see that the moment its beams struck the water a deep red reflection was caused. The intensity of the red grew with the increase of the light, so that even before the disk of the sun had risen completely above the hills the Nile offered the appearance of a river of blood. Suspecting some illusion, I rose quickly, and leaning over the side of the boat, found my first impression confirmed. The entire mass of the water was opaque, and of a dark red, more like blood than anything else to which I could compare it. At the same time, I saw that the river had risen some inches during the night, and the Arabs came to tell me it was *the Red Nile*."[1] It is fatal, however, to the belief that such a familiar phenomenon explains the wonder of Exodus, since "the water is never more healthy, more delicious, or more refreshing," than when thus discoloured.[2]

The phenomenon has been traced by Ehrenberg to the presence and inconceivably rapid growth of infusoria and

[1] Osburn's *Monumental History of Egypt*, vol. i. p. 10.

[2] Rosenmüller, *Das Alte u. Neue Morgenland*, has varied information on this subject, vol. i. p. 276.

minute cryptogamous plants of a red colour.[1] Many cases of such appearances are recorded. Ehrenberg himself, in 1823, saw the whole bay of the Red Sea, at Sinai, turned into the colour of blood by the presence of such plants.[2] Similarly, the Elbe ran with what seemed blood, for several days, in the beginning of this century. The Nile, also, has been known to have the same look, and to remain blood-like and fetid for months. In *Silliman's Journal* there is an account of a fountain of blood in a cave in South America. It grew solid and burst bottles in which it was put, and dogs ate it greedily. Before the potato rot in 1846 small red spots appeared on linen laid out to bleach, and in 1848, Eckhardt, of Berlin, saw the same on potatoes, in the house of a cholera patient; the spots in this last case proving to be caused by one of the algæ—*Palmella prodigiosa.* In 1852 a similar appearance on food, both animal and vegetable, was noticed in France, by M. Montague. In 1825, Lake Morat became like blood in different parts. In the steppes of Siberia, also, lakes have been noticed thus strangely discoloured. In the time of the Reformation, M. Merle d'Aubigné tells us, blood seemed in some parts of Switzerland to flow from the earth, from walls, and other sources, and the same thing has been noticed on bread, at Tours, in A.D. 503; at Spires, in 1103; at Rochelle, in 1163; at Namur, in 1193; and elsewhere at various times. The cause of these wonders is a minute alga which grows so rapidly that it actually flows, and is so small that there are from 46,656,000,000,000, to 884,736,000,000,000 plants in a cubic inch.[3]

[1] Cryptogamous plants are those in which the fructification is concealed. Such as ferns, mosses, lichens, algæ, and fungi, or mushrooms

[2] Lengerke's *Kenaan*, p. 406.

[3] Macmillan. Infusoria, fungi, and volcanic dust are also, perhaps, occasional causes.

We are told that this appalling visitation was inflicted at the moment of Pharaoh's going to the river;[1] apparently at the head of a religious procession; on the formal visit usually made each day at sunrise, when the inundation was beginning, to note the height of the waters, and to pay religious homage to the river.[2] The daily increase of the river was carefully registered under the personal superintendence of the king, who announced the god to be worshipped that day: for a different god presided over every new phase of the waters. But not only was the Nile affected: the miracle showed itself also, at once, in all its branches: in the "rivers," or rather canals, which covered the whole land with a network of broad streams or silver threads; in the "ponds," including the few natural springs, and all the cisterns and tanks of the towns and villages; and in all the "pools," or reservoirs, some of which were of enormous extent.[3] Nor did even the water in the stone or wooden jars of households, escape. To add to all, a great mortality followed among the fish of the river—on which the population largely depended for food.

Yet, though thus broadly stated, it is clear that some of the water must have been left unchanged, for we read that the magicians did the same by their "enchantments;" which would have been impossible if there had been no water left for them to manipulate. Marcos, the leader of a heretical sect in the ancient Church, seems to have had

[1] Exod. vii. 15.

[2] Irwin saw a troop of maidens go out, at midnight, dancing and singing, to the banks of the Nile, then beginning to rise. After bathing in the holy waters, they sang the praises of the stream. Irwin's *Incidents, etc.*, p. 229.

[3] The words used prove the sacred writer's intimate knowledge of Egypt, for they include all the water sources of the land; the arms of the Nile, the canals of irrigation, the ponds left by the Nile, and the artificial reservoirs. Hengstenberg. See also *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. p. 277. Dillmann, p. 71.

the knowledge of chemical secrets on which the Egyptian priests, also, may have acted. Having filled wine cups of transparent glass with colourless wine, he began to pray, and the fluid, as he did so, became in one of the cups *blood-red*, in another, purple, and in a third, an azure blue.[1]

That the Almighty could, if he chose, turn water into blood as easily as His divine Son turned it into wine, can be questioned by no one, but it deserves notice that equally exact language is used elsewhere in Scripture when only a similarity in appearance is meant. Thus it is said in Joel[2] that "the moon shall be turned into blood." It is striking, moreover, that in the announcement of the threatened infliction, it is not said that the Egyptians would be quite unable to drink the water, but that they "should weary themselves"[3] in their efforts to do so, and be forced to dig "round about the river" for supplies. That they obtained enough by this means is certain, else all the population would have died; but the mere filtration of the river water through the soil would not have made it drinkable had it been changed into actual blood. Moreover, in the climate of Egypt, the smell of corrupting blood would have killed every living creature, both man and beast, long before the seven days had ended.

The Second Plague, of frogs, like all the others, directly assailed Egyptian idolatry, for Heki—"the driver away of frogs"—a female deity, had the head of a frog, as also had the god Ptah, worshipped in southern Egypt, as the wife of Khaoum, the god of the cataracts of the Nile.[4] The frog, moreover, as a symbol of renewed life after death, was con-

[1] Epiphan., *Contra Hæres.*, vol. i. p. 24.

[2] Chap. ii. 31. Acts ii. 20. [3] Exod. vii. 18. Knobel.

[4] Brugsch, *Geog.*, p. 224. *Hier. Wörterbuch*, p. 478. *Grammaire Hier.*, p. 105. Plutarch says that the frog was an emblem of the sun.

nected with the most ancient forms of nature worship in the country at large.[1] It was embalmed and honoured with burial at Thebes. When the Nile and its canals are full, in the height of the inundation, the abounding moisture quickens inconceivable myriads of frogs and toads, which swarm everywhere even in ordinary years, and now did so to an extent never before known. But Hepi was so utterly powerless to deliver her worshippers from them, that even the houses and the very kneading-troughs were polluted by their presence; a trouble very serious to a people so ceremonially strict in their ideas of purity. The magicians, with their muttered spells, could only add to the evil by appearing to bring up more frogs from the marshes; when the land had to be cleared of them, Pharaoh needed to ask the aid of Moses and Aaron.[2] That he sought their help was the first sign of his yielding; but his relenting humour soon passed away.

The Third Plague was not preceded by any such warning as had been given before the two former. The soil of Egypt was as sacred as everything else in the valley of the Nile, for it was worshipped as Seb—the father of the gods.[3] But now it was to be defiled, by its very dust seeming to turn into noisome pests. At the stroke of Aaron's rod "there arose gnats on man and beast," or, as our version renders it, "lice." In this instance, also, the natural phenomena of the season were utilized, as far as they went, to carry out the judgment. When the inundation has risen above the level of the canals and channels and is rapidly flowing over

[1] Dümichen, *Ægypt. Zeitschrift*, 1869, p. 6.

[2] The words of Moses, "glory over me, etc." (Exod. viii. 9), are equal to "Thine be the honour to appoint the time when I shall entreat for thee and thy servants, etc." He would show that he could remove the plague at any time on Pharaoh's yielding. "Have this honour over me, of saying when I shall, etc."

[3] Brugsch, *Zeitschrift*, 1868, p. 123.

the entire surface, the fine dust or powder into which the mud of last year's overflow is triturated, and with which the fields are entirely covered, presents a very extraordinary phenomenon. Immediately on its being moistened with the waters, gnats and flies innumerable burst from their pupæ, and spring into perfect existence. The eggs that produce them were laid in the retiring waters of the former flood. They have matured in the interval, and vivify instantaneously on the dust absorbing moisture enough to discolour it. As the flood advances slowly onwards, a black line of living insects on its extreme verge moves with it. The sight of them, and of the birds and fishes that prey on them, is a very singular one.[1] The word used in Exodus[2] apparently includes various poisonous flies and insects. Origen traces the plague to swarms of mosquitoes.[3] The Greek Bible, translated by Jews, who, like Origen, lived in Egypt, uses a word[4] which includes not only harmless insects, but winged pests, which were fatal even to horses and cattle.[5] Brugsch thinks the word used in the Hebrew Bible[6] the same as the Egyptian word for the mosquito, and says that it has still this meaning in the Coptic, which is the representative of the Ancient Egyptian language. Sir Samuel Baker, however, speaks of a plague of vermin in Africa in terms so like those of the English version as to suggest that mosquitoes were not the only form of the visitation. There is a kind of tick, he tells us, which lives in hot sand and dust, and is "the greatest enemy to man and beast. From the size of a grain of sand, in its natural state, it swells to the size of a

[1] Osburn, *Israel in Egypt*, p. 265. [2] Exod. viii. 13, 17.

[3] *Homil. IV. in Exod.* Migne, *Patrol. Gr.*, xii. 322.

[4] Skniphês. The insects that destroyed the horses of Sapor's army at the siege of Nisibis are thus named. Theodoret, *H. E.*, ii. 30.

[5] Knobel, *Exod.*, p. 71. Liddell and Scott: "Knips." Dillmann, p. 78.

[6] Kinnim.

hazel-nut after having preyed for some days upon the blood of an animal." "At one place it seemed," he says, "as though the very dust were turned into lice."[1] Dr. Tristram[2] thinks mosquitoes cannot be meant, as they rise from the waters, not from the dust, and he supposes lice are intended; but Baker remarks that "lice" would shrivel at once in the hot dust of Africa, and therefore contends for the terrible ticks he names. To a scrupulously clean people like the Egyptians, and especially to their priests, "lice" or "ticks" would be a terrible visitation; while the inability of the magicians to remove the pest, if it were that of mosquitoes, was a direct confession of impotence on the part of the gods to whom was intrusted the preservation of the country from such visitations. "Fly-gods" were characteristic of all hot countries, in antiquity—as, for example, Zeus Apomyius, "the driver away of flies," who was worshipped at Olympia, in Greece; and Myiagros, "the protector against flies," invoked at the festival of Athena. Apollo Parnopius was the averter of locusts; the god Acchor the "protector from flies" at Cyrene. It was believed that no flies or dogs would approach the temple of Hercules Myiagros at Rome; and at Ekron, in the Philistine country, the god Beelzebub —"the Lord of Flies"—was the recognized guardian of the land from insect plagues. All that could be pretended was that the evil gods of their land were fighting against the good; that it was the work of Set, the Sutekh or Typhon of later mythology—the Egyptian Satan.

The Fourth Plague was another visitation of insects, of a different kind, but equally terrible. The Hebrew word used,[3] appears to include winged pests of all kinds,[4] as

[1] Baker's *Nile Tributaries*, p. 84. [2] *Nat. History of the Bible*, p. 304.
[3] Arob.
[4] So the Jewish expositors understand it, and also Aquila and Jerome.

might be expected in a country in which, as in Egypt, flies swarm in clouds of which inhabitants of northern countries have no idea. Their countless myriads fill the air in October and November, after the season of frogs is over. One eats them, drinks them, and breathes them.[1] I remember seeing the eyes of an infant at Thebes fringed with a row of them which the little creature never tried to drive away, being so used to them. The cockroach, cricket, and beetles generally seem also implied in the Hebrew word,[2] and, if this be so, the most sacred symbol of the Egyptian religion, the scarabæus[3] or common dung beetle of the country, must have been part of the plague. This insect, which I have often seen busy at its task, was believed to be of no sex, but to be produced directly from the balls of ox dung in which it lays its eggs, and which it afterwards buries in the ground; and hence, as the Egyptians did not suspect the presence of these eggs, it was chosen as the emblem of the creative principle. Other fanciful analogies made it be regarded also as the emblem of the sun, which was at times symbolized by an idol with the form or head of a scarabæus; of consecration to the gods; and of the abiding life of the soul, notwithstanding any change of body in future stages of its existence. It was sculptured on every monument, painted on every tomb, and on every mummy chest; engraved on gems, worn round the neck as an amulet, and honoured in ten thousand images of every size and of all materials.[4] That it, among

[1] Wood's *Bible Animals*, p. 633.

[2] Rosenmüller, *Das Alte u. Neue Morgenland*, vol. i. p. 286. Gesenius, 9th edition, p. 661.

[3] Prof. Drake, in *Smith's Bible Dict.*, translates "swarms of flies," by "swarms of beetles;" so Kalisch and others. Hug, quoted by Winer, thinks that the fly, under the form of which Beelzebub was represented, was the scarabæus.

[4] Creuzer's *Symbolik*, p. 162. There was a god—Cheperu—with the head of a beetle.

other insects, should be multiplied into a plague, was a blow at idolatry that would come home to all. But stinging flies were added to the visitation : vast swarms of them, perhaps, being blown northwards to Lower Egypt, from the great marshes of the Upper Nile, by the south wind, as sometimes happens still.[1] Among these the cattle-fly, which is far worse in its bite than the mosquito, is perhaps especially meant. Coming in immense clouds, it covers all objects with its black and loathsome masses, and causes severe inflammation by its bites. Indeed, in Abyssinia, it is still so much dreaded, that at its approach in the rainy season, the inhabitants move off with their herds ; man and beast being alike unable to endure them.[2]

But the trouble caused in Egypt even by the common fly is almost indescribable. When the country is mostly under water, during the height of the inundation, they increase to a fearful extent. No curtains, or other precautions can exclude them. Their food being diminished by the great amount of land under water, they seem literally mad with hunger, and light in countless numbers upon whatever promises to satisfy it. Every drinking vessel is filled with them, and they cover every article of food in a moment. If, however, it be thus in some years even now, what must it have been when they came in such millions, that Egypt seemed turned into a region as much to be loathed as it was formerly loved.[3]

The Fifth Plague touched the honour of the Egyptian religion in one of its tenderest points—the worship of Isis and Osiris, to whom the cow and the ox were sacred, and of the great god Amon, of whom the ram was the living sym-

[1] Fliegen, in Schenkel's *Lex.*, and in Riehm.
[2] One is reminded of the tsetse fly of the Zambesi.
[3] Exod. viii. 24. "The land was corrupted, etc."

bol. The sacred cow, the ox Apis, and the calf Mnevis, were in fact their greatest deities. It is the custom to strew the surface of the inundation waters with seed of lentils, vetches, and other plants,[1] and trample them into the soil to prevent their being washed away, by driving cattle of all kinds, back and forward, through the soft mud. In this process, however, the herds suffer so greatly that numbers of sick beasts, tended by skilful herdsmen, are represented in almost all the pictures of it in the tombs. Perhaps this common passage in Egyptian agricultural life was the starting point of the terrible calamity now sent on the land. It may have been, however, at the close of the inundation, when the water is very foul; for murrain has been noticed to occur at that season.[2] In any case, a wide mortality broke out suddenly, not only among the sheep and oxen, but even among the camels, horses, and asses, and threatened to destroy them utterly.[3] Murrain is even yet not uncommon in Egypt, and sometimes is very fatal. Thus, in 1842 the rinderpest swept off great part of the cattle of all kinds,[4] and in 1786 they were almost exterminated by a similar disease.[5] But the plague brought on them by Aaron could not be confounded with such natural visitations, for, like that of the flies, it was limited to the strictly Egyptian districts, and did not enter Goshen, while it also came and ceased with equal suddenness at the word of Moses.

[1] Eccles. xi. 1.

[2] Knobel, *Exodus*, p. 77. It breaks out almost yearly after the subsidence of the inundation. Chabas, *Mélanges Égyptologiques*, 1st ser. p. 39. Dillmann, p. 83.

[3] Exod. ix. 6, says "*all* the cattle of Egypt died," but in verse 19, and in chap. xi. 5, it is seen that this is not to be understood as it reads. The poverty of the Hebrew language is, in fact, the cause, in this and many other cases, of universality being stated when it is not really designed. There were no words to express limitations.

[4] Lepsius' *Briefe aus Egypten*, p. 14.

[5] In 1863 the murrain began in November and was at its height in December. This is its usual time. *Speaker's Comment.*

In the Sixth Plague the hand of God pressed still more heavily on the Egyptians, for now they themselves were smitten. Nor was the lesson taught by the new visitation less striking than the others in its religious aspect. Handfuls of ashes from the "furnaces," it may be the smelting furnaces for iron[1]—the special emblems in Scripture of the bitter slavery of the Hebrews—were sprinkled towards heaven in the sight of Pharaoh; an act familiar to those who may have seen it done, though the import could not for the moment be realized. In various Egyptian towns sacred to Set or Typhon, the god of Evil—Heliopolis and Busiris, in the Delta, among them—red-haired and light-complexioned men, and, as such, foreigners, perhaps often Hebrews,[2] were yearly offered in sacrifice to this hideous idol. After being burnt alive on a high altar, their ashes were scattered in the air by the priests, in the belief that they would avert evil from all parts whither they were blown.[3] But, now, the ashes thrown into the air by Moses, instead of carrying blessing with them, fell everywhere in a rain of blains and boils on the people, and even on the cattle which the murrain had spared. Grievous to every class, this plague, which some have thought the leprosy,[4] must have fallen with special

[1] The image of a furnace for smelting iron is often used in this connection. Thus, "I have brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt." Deut. iv. 20. "I have brought them forth from Egypt, from the iron furnace." Jer. xi. 4. "I have chosen thee out of the furnace of affliction." Isa. xlviii. 10. "Out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron." 1 Kings viii. 51.

[2] Thus David was "ruddy." 1 Sam. xvi. 12; xvii. 42. "My beloved," says Canticles, "is white and ruddy," *i.e.*, "dazzling white and red." Delitzsch, *Das Hohelied*, v. 10.

[3] "In India, when magicians pronounce an imprecation on an individual, a village, or a country, they take the ashes of cow dung from a common fire, and *throw them into the air*, saying to the objects of their displeasure, Such a sickness, or such a curse shall surely come on you." Roberts' *Oriental Illustrations*.

[4] It is perhaps in vague reference to this that Tacitus says: "Many authors agree that a plague which made the body hideous having broken out in Egypt, the king, Bocchoris, on the counsel of the oracle of Ammon, from which he had asked what

severity on the priests, by rendering them unclean and thus incapacitating them for their duties. No attempt could be made to imitate such a judgment. The "interpreters of secret signs" could not even stand before Moses.

Six plagues had now failed to make Pharaoh own defeat and grant the Hebrews permission to leave the country. To lose a whole nation of slaves was hardly worse than to admit that the gods of the land had been humbled by Jehovah. A Seventh Plague was therefore sent. It was now about the month of March, for the barley was in ear and the flax in blossom, but wheat, rye, and spelt were yet only green.[1] A terrible storm of thunder and lightning, accompanied by hail, presently devastated all the land except Goshen, which it did not affect. Such a phenomenon was unheard of, for though thunder and hail are not unknown in Egypt in spring, they are rarely severe. Wittman, indeed, encountered a great thunder-storm with lightning, in November, and Lepsius notices another in December, accompanied with hail,[2] but even these were very unusual occurrences. How must it have shocked a nation so devout towards its gods, to find that the waters, the earth, and the air, the growth of the fields, the cattle, and even their own persons, all under the care of a host of divinities, were yet, in succession, smitten by a power against which these protectors were impotent! But the lesson was sinking into the hearts of

he should do, was ordered to purge the kingdom of those thus afflicted, and to send them away to other countries, as hateful to the gods." *Hist.*, v. 3. Contagious diseases are said, in an old Egyptian document, to have been frequent in December. *Pap. Sall.*, iv.

[1] Exod. ix. 31, 32. Barley and flax are generally ripe in Egypt in March; wheat and spelt in April. In Palestine, except the Jordan valley, these crops are from a month to six weeks later. The flax crops were very important, from the wide use of linen in Egypt, for priests and others.

[2] Knobel's *Exodus*, p. 81. One at Beni-Hassan, in February, "of extreme severity," as mentioned in the *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. p. 285. Dillmann's *Exodus*, p. 87.

the Hebrews, if not of the Egyptians, that "the earth is Jehovah's," and that idols were vanity.

The Eighth Plague took the dreaded form of a miraculous visitation of locusts, than which nothing more terrible could follow the devastation of the hail.[1] The invasions of these insects are one of the heaviest calamities to the regions they afflict. In the Old World, the vast sweep from the Cape of Good Hope to Norway, and from China to the West Coast of Africa; but especially from Arabia to India, and from the Nile and the Red Sea to Greece and the north of Asia Minor, is exposed to their ravages. Their legions have been known to cross the Black Sea and alight on the fields of Poland, and to pass over the Mediterranean and fall on the green plains of Lombardy. Always advancing in a straight line and leaving behind them the countless germs of future swarms, they devour everything green that comes in their way. Their numbers exceed computation: the Hebrews called them "the countless," and the Arabs know them as "the darkeners of the sun." Unable to guide their own flight, though capable of crossing large spaces, they are at the mercy of the wind, which bears them as blind instruments of Providence,[2] to the doomed region given over to them for the time. Innumerable as the drops of water or the sands of the sea-shore, their flight obscures the sun and casts a thick shadow on the earth. It seems, indeed, as if a great aërial mountain, many miles in breadth, were advancing with a slow unresting progress. Woe to the countries beneath them, if the wind fall and let them alight! They

[1] Locusts seem to visit Egypt, when they do come, from March to May. The Egyptians were passionately fond of trees. There are many notices of the importation of foreign ones to beautify the land.

[2] "The pest of the anger of the gods," is the name Pliny gives them. *Hist. Nat.*, ii. 35.

descend unnumbered as flakes of snow, and hide the ground. It may be "like the garden of Eden before them, but behind them it is a desolate wilderness. At their approach the peoples are in anguish; all faces lose their colour."[1] No walls can stop them in their winged stage: no ditches arrest them: fires kindled in their path are forthwith extinguished by the myriads of their dead, and the countless armies march on. If a door or a window be open, they enter and destroy everything of wood in the house. Every terrace, court, and inner chamber is filled with them in a moment. Such an awful invasion now swept over Egypt, consuming before it everything green, and stripping the trees, till the land was bared of all signs of vegetation. Nor did they cease their ravages till Pharaoh had called Moses and secured his intercession for the land by a promise to let Israel go. Then, at the "entreaty" of His servant, Jehovah sent a strong north-west wind from the Mediterranean which swept the locusts into the Red Sea.[2]

Once more, for the moment, Pharaoh was humbled. Even this visitation failed to influence him long. It is, after all, only a natural event, whispered the priests, and so Israel was still kept in bonds. There had, indeed, been a show of concession before the locusts came, but Moses had justly refused it. The men might go, by themselves, Pharaoh had said, to hold a religious feast to Jehovah, but the rest must stay. "Jehovah will certainly be with you," he had added, with a sneer, "when I let you and your little ones go together! You intend evil. The men may go and serve Jehovah: you wanted that"—and he drove Moses and

[1] Joel ii. 6 (literally translated).

[2] The removal of locusts is generally brought about by the wind. "Being carried off by the wind," says Pliny, "they fall into seas or lakes." *Hist. Nat.*, xi. 35. The putrefaction of the masses of locusts thus drowned sometimes causes a pestilence.

Aaron out of his presence.[1] But now that a plague so awful had come, he was willing that only the flocks and herds should be left behind, as a pledge for the return of the Hebrews. He had, however, refused the first request for only three days' journey away from Egypt,[2] to a spot where sacrifices of creatures sacred among the Egyptians could be offered without infuriating the population; and now the demand was indefinitely increased—even the cattle, to the last hoof, must go with them. Nor was anything more said of a merely temporary journey.[3] Meanwhile, before it had come to this, the Ninth Plague fell upon the land. The sun was the supreme god of Egypt, and he, too, was at last to veil himself before Jehovah. From whatever cause, natural or miraculous, an intense darkness was brought over all Egypt, except Goshen, for three days, during which men could not see each other, and all movement was stopped. A physical phenomenon, frequent in Egypt, though of less intensity, may possibly illustrate the agency divinely used to produce this result. A hot wind, known as the Chamsin, blows from the equator, in Africa, towards the north, in April or between March and May. The name means "fifty," from the Chamsin prevailing intermittently for sometimes two, three, or four days together, during that number of days, with a calm between the storms, of it may be a month. In the desert it raises vast whirlwinds of sand, which sometimes bury entire caravans. Indeed, they once overwhelmed the whole army of Camby-

[1] Exod. x. 9–11.

[2] The Egyptians seem to have had religious pilgrimages to points outside their own country. There are still stone monuments with inscriptions by the Pharaohs, at Surabit el Khadim, which seem to mark it as a place to which such pilgrimages were made. The request of Moses would not, therefore, be anything strange. Robinson's *Palestine*, vol. i. p. 128. Lengerke's *Kenaan*, p. 403.

[3] Exod. x. 9–11, 24.

ses, sent against Amon, so completely, that it disappeared as if swallowed up by the waves of the sea.[1] It is always attended with a thickness of the air, through which the sun sheds at best only a dim yellow light; even this passing in many cases into complete darkness. On these occasions the people in the towns and villages shut themselves up in their houses, in the innermost apartments, or in underground cellars, if there be any, and those in the desert dig holes in the earth, or hide themselves in caves or pits, and await the end of the storm. Artificial light at such times is of little use, for it cannot pierce the opaque air. The streets are perfectly empty, and a deep silence, like that of night, reigns everywhere. An Arab chronicler, about the end of the eleventh century, records a great storm accompanied by darkness so intense that it was thought the end of the world was at hand.[2] Startled by the awful intensity of the darkness in the present case, Pharaoh once more seemed about to yield. But the demand of Moses, that the Hebrews should take with them the whole of their flocks and herds, again roused his stubbornness, and the interview ended amidst angry threats of the king that the audacious intruder on his peace should die if he came to him again. His cup, however, was nearly full, and Moses, knowing the future, could repeat the words with an awful significance—that he would indeed see his face no more.[3] The Exodus was at hand.

[1] Herod., iii. 26. Kalisch, *Exod.*, p. 129.

[2] Rosenmüller's *Alterthumskunde*, vol. iii. p. 220. Denon's *Travels*, vol. i. p. 285. The words "darkness that may be felt," in our version, are translated by Kalisch, "so that they may grope in darkness." Zunz translates them, "The darkness will continue." Hirsch and De Wette agree with our version.

[3] The "rage and fury" of Nebuchadnezzar at the thwarting of his least whim (Dan. iii. 13), may help us to picture the interview between Moses and Menephtah. Exod. ix. 34 explains what is said elsewhere of God hardening the heart of Pharaoh, for it distinctly tells us that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. See *Studien und Kritiken*, 1844, p. 464.

CHAPTER VI.

THE TENTH PLAGUE AND THE EXODUS.

No great national crisis is of sudden growth. More than a generation had passed since Moses, in a sudden heat of irrepressible indignation, had smitten down the Egyptian overseer for his cruelty to a Hebrew; a first outbreak against the enslavement of his people which he, in all likelihood, hoped would prove the signal for their general uprising, to strike for freedom under his leadership. In his secret thoughts he had doubtless long dreamed of their possible emancipation, and it might well seem that, now he had committed himself to them, they might rally round him, and break away, as free men, into the desert which was so near. But the iron had entered into their souls, and his daring patriotism, far from finding support, seemed likely to end only in his death, through the evidence given by Hebrews themselves against him. From that time, in the depths of Midian, the one thought had still engrossed him. But he had had to endure the pain of hope deferred for many years, while, in his absence, Aaron was gradually educating his brethren, through their tribal organization, to higher thoughts, and to a sense of religious and national unity, in opposition to the Egyptians. At last the time seemed ripe, and Aaron, divinely prompted, could go to Midian, to commune with his brother, and prepare for the future.

But the religious development of the Hebrew community was still imperfect, for centuries of residence among the idols of Egypt, and of the Asiatic tribes of the Delta, had sadly lowered the spiritual sensibilities of most, and had created almost imperceptibly a leaning towards the corrupt worship around them. It was necessary, therefore, before they broke away from the Nile valley, that they should be constituted, formally, a distinct community, chosen by Jehovah for Himself, and recognizing Him, only, as their God. To secure their adoption of a divinity almost new to them—for they had well-nigh forgotten the faith of their patriarch forefathers—it was imperative that they should feel His supreme greatness, as contrasted with the false gods they were required to abandon for His sake; and this the successive plagues effected. Egyptian idolatry had been utterly dishonoured and discredited by Him whom they were henceforth, alone, to worship. To this great Being, moreover, they were permitted to look, henceforth, as their Protector and Heavenly King, and as the God of their fathers. To be His "first-born sons" [1] by this separation to His service, was to be impressed on them as their greatest glory, and the imperishable pledge of their future.

One act more remained of the sublime drama, by which these mighty revelations should be brought home to the hearts of all Israel. The Pharaoh, still obdurate, was to be humbled to the dust by a judgment so terrible that he would gladly resign the contest with Jehovah, and let the race whom so awful a Power thus championed, "go, altogether;" thankful to be rid of them, and even "thrusting them out" [2] from the Nile valley. But, thus to abase the Pharaoh was to degrade the national idolatry in his person

[1] Exod. iv. 22. [2] Exod. xi. 1.

—for he was, himself, the incarnation of the great Sun-god Ra.

It was necessary, however, that the Hebrews should be prepared for their sudden departure, and for entering on a tent-life in the desert, like that of their forefathers. Their training in the arts and occupations of Egypt secured them the elements of a higher civilization than that of mere shepherds, and fitted them for their destined part as a settled community in Palestine. But their humble position, as a whole, in Goshen and throughout Egypt, especially for the long period of their slavery, left them unprovided with adequate means for their religious or social wants as a community. While some may have gained wealth, the multitude must have been very poor, for the Egyptians, for generations, had forced them to labour for them without wages. They were now about to set out on a great religious pilgrimage to Sinai, a holy region to the tribes around, related to them, and then to enter on an independent life as a nation; and this demanded, among much else, due provision of robes, ornaments and vessels, for religious festivities. They and the bulk of the Egyptian people had lived on friendly terms, for the native population, like the poor Mussulmans in Turkey, were hardly less oppressed than the Hebrews themselves. Even among the wealthy, moreover, who had supported the tyranny of the Pharaohs, and in the court itself, the events of the last months had made all feel the necessity of deprecating further plagues from God. When, therefore, the word went forth from Moses to Israel, to ask[1] from all around them, likely to have such things,

[1] Not to borrow. Exod. iii. 22; xi. 2. The Hebrew word simply means "to make a request." The wealth so obtained was doubtless regarded by the Hebrews as only a just return for long service and cruel wrongs. Knobel and Kalisch both reject the idea of "lending." In India, even the poorest are seen at religious festivals well

the dresses,[1] and ornaments, and vessels which the wilderness could not yield, the appeal was widely successful.

And now, as the first step towards an independent national organization under Jehovah, their invisible king; as the formal inauguration of His worship as the national God, and in recognition of their emancipation being due to Him alone, a sacrificial feast—the Passover—was instituted. But, first of all, the date from which their year began was changed; for it was fitting that the deliverance of the nation should open a new era. It was the time of the earing of the wheat—almost our April—and, henceforth, the month, known from this, as Abib—the "earing"—should be the first of the ecclesiastical year. Hitherto they had contented themselves with the Egyptian calendar, which began about the time of the summer solstice,[2] when the Nile was rising, and harvest is over in Palestine.[3] From this time, however, all connection with Egypt was to be broken off, and the commencement of the sacred year was to commemorate the time when Jehovah led them forth to liberty and independence.

It would seem as if the Hebrews, like other ancient races, had held yearly festivals at the different seasons, even while in Egypt. Spring, when the green ears shoot out, was in all nations of antiquity marked by religious festivities, the great characteristic of which, however differently expressed, was a desire to avert evil from the community by propitiating the higher powers. It was doubtless on the existence of such a custom among his own people that Moses based his

adorned with jewels which they have borrowed for the occasion from their richer neighbours. Roberts.

[1] Exod. xii. 35.

[2] Lepsius, *Chron. der Ægypter*, vol. i. p. 148.

[3] Lev. xxiii. 16.

demand, so many times repeated, that they should be allowed to go outside Egypt, to hold a great sacred feast, with their national rites.[1] Availing himself of this established usage, he at the same time changed it, from a mere vague expression of religious feeling, to a distinctly historical and theocratic institution. Israel was henceforth to base its religion on the assurance that it was the chosen people of Jehovah, standing in a special relation to Him, as a royal and priestly race: the great deliverance from Egypt by which He separated them to Himself, consecrating them as such. The old feast of spring was therefore, from this time, changed to a yearly celebration of a unique and transcendent event. On the tenth day of Abib each head of a family was to set apart a kid or a lamb; which must be a male, without blemish, in its first year. If a household were too small to consume the whole,[2] members of another were to join. Four days later, in the minutes between the sunset and the appearance of the stars, the whole "congregation" were to kill the victims thus selected; each family sprinkling its blood on their doorposts and lintels, as the parts most readily seen, and holding the feast in their own dwelling. The lamb or kid was to be roasted entire, with head, legs, and entrails—of course after being cleansed—the bones unbroken; and any part of it left was to be burned next morning. The directions for the meal were also striking. They were to stand, their sandals on their feet, their staff in their hands, their girdle bound round them, as in preparation for a journey, and they were to eat "in haste." No

[1] Exod. v. 1, 3, 17; vii. 16; viii. 1, 20, 25 ff.; ix. 1, 13; x. 9. The name of the month, Abib, is given in chap. xiii. 4. It was called Nisan by the later Hebrews—from the Assyrian Nisannu. The early Syrians called it Nisan. De Vogüé, *Syrie Centrale*, p. 5.

[2] The later Targums say, that ten were required at each Passover circle.

one was to leave the house that night. No foreigner could join in the festival, and the flesh must not be carried outside the house. Every care was to be taken that no part of it should be applied to profane uses, or shared by any but the chosen people. It was "holy to Jehovah," and a memorial of His relations with Israel alone.

The Hebrew population were, meanwhile, to be ready at a moment's notice, to set out on their flight for liberty, when summoned, before morning, to do so.[1] The awful significance of the blood sprinkled on the door-posts and lintels of their houses was moreover impressed on them by the announcement, that God was to pass through the land of Egypt that night, to smite all the first-born, both of man and beast, and thus to execute judgment against all the gods of the land;[2] but would "pass over" every house on which the blood was seen, leaving its inmates unharmed.[3]

Every detail, indeed, was significant. The sprinkled blood marked the rite as a sacrifice, for it redeemed them from the death let loose on Egypt.[4] As that of a sinless victim, the household might, as it were, hide behind it and escape the just punishment of their sins.[5] That the lamb was given them as a feast was, moreover, a sign of Jehovah's favour, and brought Him, as it were, to be their guest. There being as yet no common sanctuary, each house had its own sacrifice; in the absence of a public altar to Jehovah, the blood was to be sprinkled on the door-posts and lintels;

[1] Exod. xii. 30.

[2] Exod. xii. 12. This doubtless implies that the sacred animals were smitten. In every temple the god lay dead.

[3] Exod. xii. 23.

[4] It is a curious illustration of the vitality of religious rites, that the Mohammedans even to this day, at the great feast of Bairam, yearly, sacrifice sheep and sprinkle the blood on the door-posts of their houses. Strauss, *Sinai and Golgotha*, p. 63.

[5] Köhler, vol. i. p. 195.

no priests having as yet been consecrated, these duties were fulfilled by each household father.

Coupled with this, a second feast[1] was to be observed—that of unleavened bread, with the same object of keeping permanently alive the remembrance of their being "thrust out from Egypt," so suddenly that they had to take with them "their dough before it was leavened, and bind up their kneading-troughs in their clothes upon their shoulders."[2] The Passover lamb was eaten with such unleavened bread, to remind them of this, and with bitter herbs as a memento of the affliction they had undergone; and only unleavened bread was to be used for seven days after the Passover, to impress on them that for many days after their escape from Pharaoh, the hot haste of flight left no time to prepare any other kind. Nor was the yearly recurrence of these festivals thought enough to stamp on the heart of the nation, age after age, the memory of its wondrous birth. The first-born of man and beast were demanded for Jehovah, to be bought back only by a ransom, in impressive acknowledgment that when the first-born of Egypt perished, that of Israel, though spared, had been justly exposed to the same doom, but for the propitiating sacrifice.[3]

[1] The word for feast is Haj the word for a religious pilgrimage among the Mohammedans now.

[2] Exod. xii. 34.

[3] The characteristics of the original observance of the Passover may in some measure be preserved in the rites with which it is kept by the modern Samaritans. The following is the account of these given by the Rev. John Mills in his *Modern Samaritans*, pp. 250-256:—

"The tents, ten in number, were arranged in a kind of circle, to face the highest point of the mountain, where rose their ancient temple, now lying in ruins. Within a radius of a few hundred yards from the place where I stood, clustered all the spots which make Gerizim to them the most sacred mountain, the house of God. Under my feet was the ruined wall of their famous temple; a little on my left, to the south, were the seven steps of Adam out of Paradise; still a little further southward was the place of the offering of Isaac; close by it, westward, was the rock of the Holy Place; and just by the wall on which I stood, northwestward, were the celebrated

The curse now broke over the doomed land. "It came to pass, that at midnight Jehovah smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh, that sat on his throne (that is, who reigned with him), unto the

Joshua stones. A few hundred yards westward was their encampment, in front of which was the platform for the celebration of their holy feast.

"About half-past ten, the officials kindled the fire to roast the lambs. For this purpose, a circular pit had been sunk in the earth, about six feet deep and three feet in diameter, and built round with loose stones. In this a fire, made of dry heather, and briers, etc., was kindled, the minister of the synagogue meanwhile standing on a large stone, and offering up a prayer suited to the occasion. Another fire was then kindled in a kind of sunken trough, close to the platform where the service was to be performed. Over this, two caldrons full of water were placed, and a short prayer offered. We then returned to the priest's tent, for a short time, to regale ourselves with lemonade, till, about half an hour before mid-day, the whole male population assembled to commence the regular service. There were forty-eight adults, besides women and children; the women and the little ones remaining in the tents. The congregation were in their ordinary dress, with the exception of the two officers, and two or three of the elders, who were dressed in their white robes, as in the synagogue. A carpet was laid on the ground, near the boiling caldrons, where Yacub, the minister of the synagogue, stood, on the stone, with his face to the people, and chanted the service, assisted by some of the elders—all turning their faces towards the site of the temple. Six lambs driven by five young men, dressed in blue cotton, their loins girded, now made their appearance. At mid-day, the service had reached the place where the account of the Paschal sacrifice is introduced; 'And the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening' (Exod. xii. 6); when, in an instant, the lambs, one after another, were thrown on their backs by the blue-clad young men, and in a moment lay dying under the flashing knife of one of their number. The young men now dipped their fingers in the blood, and marked a spot on the foreheads and noses of the children and some of the females; but on none of the male adults. The whole male congregation then came up close to the reader; embracing and kissing one another, because the lambs of their redemption had been slain. Next came the fleecing—not skinning—while the service still continued. It was done by pouring boiling water from the caldrons, the effect of which was to *scald* off the wool so that it could be easily removed. Each lamb was then lifted up, with its head downwards, to drain off the remaining blood. The right fore legs, which belonged to the priest, were next removed, and, together with the entrails and some salt, placed on the wood, already laid, and then burnt; but the liver was carefully replaced. The inside being sprinkled with salt, and the hamstrings carefully removed, the spitting began. For this purpose they had a long pole, which was thrust through from head to tail, a transverse peg near the end preventing the body from slipping off. The lambs were now carried to the oven, which was by this time well heated, and were lowered into it carefully, so that the sacrifice might not be defiled by coming in contact with the oven itself. This accomplished, a hurdle was placed over the mouth of the oven, and well-covered with moistened earth, to prevent any of the heat escaping. By this time it was about two o'clock, and this part of the service was ended.

first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of the cattle. And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.[1] And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel;

"At sunset the service was recommenced. All the male population, with the lads, assembled round the oven. A large copper dish, filled with unleavened cakes and bitter herbs, rolled up together, was held by the nephew of the priest, and its contents distributed amongst the congregation. The hurdle was then removed, and the lambs drawn up one by one; but unfortunately one fell off the spit, and was taken up with difficulty. Their appearance was anything but inviting, for they were burnt as black as ebony. Carpets having been spread to receive them, they were removed to the platform where the service was read. The congregation stood in two files, the lambs, strewn with bitter herbs, being laid in a line between them. Most of the adults had now a kind of rope round the waist, and staves in their hands, and all had their shoes on, in exact compliance with the words, 'Thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, your staff in your hand' (Exod. xii. 11). The chanting was now continued by the priest for about fifteen minutes, ending with the blessing; after which the congregation at once stooped,* and, as if in haste and hunger, tore up the blackened masses piecemeal with their fingers, eating them at once, and carrying portions to the females and little ones in the tents. In less than ten minutes the whole, with the exception of a few fragments, had disappeared. These were gathered and placed on the hurdle, and the area carefully examined, every crumb picked up, together with the bones, and all burnt over a fire, kindled for the purpose in the trough where the water had been boiled. 'And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire' (Exod. xii. 10). Whilst the flames were burning, and consuming the remnant of the paschal lambs, the people returned cheerfully to their tents."

[1] In the Egyptian accounts this destruction was ascribed to a battle with the hated "Shepherds." Jos., *c. Ap.* i. 27. The Psalmist ascribes it to a sudden and terrible visitation of the plague. "He spared not their soul from death, but gave their life over unto the pestilence." Ps. lxxviii. 51. The plague is noticed as often following the Chamsin or pitchy-dark storm wind. Its mortality is sometimes awful. In 1580, 50,000 men died of it in Cairo in eight months. In 1696, as many as 10,000 men in one day! In Constantinople in 1714 it was reckoned that 300,000 died of it. Even in Palestine it made awful ravages, for in 2 Sam. xxiv. we read that 70,000 died of it in three days. Uhlemann strikingly reminds us that all the plagues are connected with the natural peculiarities and phenomena of Egypt, and that they show the narrator's intimate knowledge of the country. "The Almighty hand of God," he continues, "shows itself, hence, not so much in the wonders themselves, as in their wide reach, their intensity, and the swift succession in which they came, at the Divine command - for, individually, they are specially characteristic of Egypt, in a certain degree, at all times."

* When Dean Stanley saw the ceremony they all *sat* to eat.

and go, serve Jehovah, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also." These last words seem to gleam through the tears of the humbled king, as he lamented his son snatched from him by so sudden a death, and trembled with a sense of the helplessness which his proud soul at last felt, when the avenging hand of God had visited even his palace. Striking to say, a monument confirms the fact that Menephtah during his lifetime lost his eldest son, who bore the same name as himself. This prince, associated with him on the throne, is commemorated on a colossal statue of his father now in the museum at Berlin. He is "the Uræus snake on the front of the royal crown; the son whom Menephtah loves, who draws towards him his father's heart; the royal scribe; the singer; the chief of the archers; the Prince Menephtah," and is represented as adoring Sutekh, "the great god, the lord of heaven;" and as "the justified," or, as we should say, "the glorified one," and "the blessed," that is, the departed.[1]

To this it had all come at last. In the panic fear of the moment things might go as they liked. The policy of generations had given way. No matter, now, if the masses in the Delta, sprung from the foreign prisoners of reign after reign; the various shepherd tribes admitted from time to time to its bounds; and the vast throngs of Hebrews, the most useful and the cheapest labour power of the country —were to be lost in one sweep! Menephtah's reign, mostly peaceful, had seemed more secure from danger than that of the kings before him, for he was in close friendship with the warlike nations of Palestine; his eastern boundary was

[1] Lauth, *Aus Alt-Ægyptischer Zeit. Pharao, Moses und Exodus. Allg. Zeitung*, 25th July, 1875.

strongly fortified : and there were no enemies with whom the Hebrews and other foreign races in Egypt could ally themselves. Treaties, moreover, bound the Canaanite kingdoms to give up any fugitives, and those kingdoms, on the edge of whose rich territories the nomades of the Egyptian frontier, the Hebrew slaves, and the other alien population of the Delta, hung like a war cloud—as the Arabs threaten the French province of Algiers—were too highly civilized not to dread their escape from the Nile valley, as much as the Egyptians themselves. Yet all had now happened which had seemed impossible ! Every effort had been made to prevent these masses gathering to a centre. They could be kept under so long as they acted only in isolated bands, but, if they succeeded in rallying to one point, the small brooks which, singly, could be easily dammed, would swell to a torrent that might perhaps rush, wasting and destroying, on the rich provinces west of Egypt, or turn to the east against Palestine. But even in this case how many thousand private Egyptian interests must suffer, where the alliance was so close as with these countries, and how certain was a new war of resentment !

That Menephtah under such circumstances should have done his utmost to keep the Hebrews scattered over the land, in harmless fractions, was natural. For at least a year, therefore, he had tenaciously maintained an unequal struggle for this end : a struggle of the mightiest on earth against the surely self-accomplishing will of Heaven. He had striven hard to break through the net, but it only drew round him the more closely after each attempt to escape from it. Distracted between granting a demand which undermined his throne, and the breach of promises, each violation of which filled him with dread of new chastise-

ments from Heaven, his resistance had finally given way when the awful darkness covered the land with a gloom like that of his own spirit. He had then yielded so far as to grant that the Hebrews might go off into the wilderness, if they left behind them, as a pledge of their return, the herds in which their wealth consisted, from which they derived their nourishment, and without which they were helpless. But Moses had rejected such a conditional favour, and had filled the cup of Menephtah's alarm with the bitter threat of the death of the first-born of all Egypt, and the prediction that he and his courtiers would presently throw themselves at his feet, beseeching him to leave the stricken land. And all this had come to pass![1]

The terrors of the plagues must have sunk more deeply into the Pharaoh's soul than they otherwise would have done, from the fact that his dynasty—the Nineteenth—especially honoured the Canaanitish god Sutekh or Set, who had, it was thought, greatly aided Rameses II. in his wars in Palestine and Syria. He would readily confound this foreign god, whose favour his house had received in the past, and whose anger was therefore the more to be dreaded, with the God of Moses—in his eyes a Canaanite by descent—and fancy that the very power in which he had trusted was turned against him.[2]

The number of the Hebrews in Egypt may be approximately gathered from the repeated statement that there were among them 600,000 men able to bear arms—that is, between twenty and sixty years of age.[3] This would imply a total of at least 2,000,000 of men, women, and children;[4] an aggregate so great as to have led many to fancy an error

[1] *Durch Gosen*, pp. 81–88.
[2] Diestel, in Riehm, p. 1022.
[3] Exod. xii. 37; xxxviii. 26. Num. i. 45, 46.
[4] Bertheau calculates 3,000,000.

in the text. In apparent confirmation of this supposition, the number of the first-born males, at Sinai, is given [1] as 22,-273, which allows only 1 to every 30 men. But the first-born of purely Hebrew families may, alone, have been reckoned in this case, while the foreign multitude, and the slaves who went out with the Hebrews, may be counted among the men fit for war.[2] Nor is it possible to argue from the present condition of the Sinai Peninsula and the regions immediately south of Palestine, as to the population able to live there for a lengthened period, over 3,000 years ago, by moving from place to place, as the Hebrews did.[3]

Everything had been prepared for the final moment, and now the Egyptians, filled with terror, urged the instant departure of the Hebrews. Nor did the long-enslaved multitudes delay. Summoned in the midst of their Passover feast, before the dawn of the 15th of the month thenceforth called Abib, every father hurried, by the light of the full April moon, with his wife and children, to the rendezvous already appointed—to put himself under the leaders of his tribal division ; his little ones and the sick in the panniers of asses, his cattle driven before him, the unbaked bread, in the family kneading-trough, wrapped up in his abba on his shoulder.[4] As the avalanche grows in its onward rolling, so

[1] Num. iii. 43.

[2] Joseph's marriage with an Egyptian was no doubt widely imitated, so that many of the Hebrews would be of mixed blood, and many Egyptian women would leave Egypt with them. This intermarriage may in part explain the great increase of the Hebrews. It is to be remembered that even Moses married a Cushite wife. Many slaves and retainers, moreover, had come to Egypt with Jacob, and had most probably been merged into the Hebrew tribes before the time of the Exodus. See Uhlemann, *Israeliten u. Hyksos*, p. 51. Also Lev. xxiv. 10.

[3] Bertheau, *Geschichte der Israeliten*, p. 256. Ebers and some others think there is an error in the numbers, but Bertheau, an acute and independent critic, accepts them, as does also Ewald. The Rev. S. Clark, in the *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. p. 299, thinks the numbers do not exceed a reasonable estimate of the increase of the Israelites, including their numerous dependents.

[4] "Each Arab wears round his shoulders a sheepskin, which serves the double

swelled the march of the Hebrews as they touched town after town, and were joined not only by fresh crowds of their own race, but by throngs of Semitic prisoners of war, by kindred bands, like themselves, sorely oppressed, and by multitudes of slaves; bringing with them additional herds and flocks. From Tanis, on the west, they poured south to Fakusa, and thence to Pithom. From Avaris, on the east, on the far north coast, at the fortified wall, past Migdol, "the tower,"[1] with its castle and garrison, they pressed south-west to Tanis. From On, in the south, and all the country between, they streamed northwards, to join the great contingent from the north, at Pithom, where the great canal, running to the Crocodile Sea, branched off from an arm of the Nile. Bubastis, to the east of that town, sent its hosts, and the united multitudes, meeting near Pithom, struck due east to Rameses, on the canal from Bubastis, where all the tribes assembled to follow their great leader. Swift-footed messengers, who are never wanting in the east,[2] had carried the command to start at once for that city. Three or four days after the morning of the 15th would find all gathered at the common centre; separated roughly into their respective tribes, with what arms they could muster, and arrayed for the march, if Ewald be right, in five divisions; the van, centre, two wings, and rear-guard.[3]

purpose of a cloak and a baking board. Spread on the ground, fleece downward, the dough is kneaded on it in thin round cakes. They also carry small wooden bowls or troughs to make the dough. Their mill on a journey is simply two stones. Kindling a hot fire of dry camels' dung, they heat the ground well, then brush off the fire, lay down the cake, cover it with the ashes, and in ten minutes it is baked." Stewart's *Tent and the Khan.*

[1] "From Migdol to Syene," was in Egypt equal to "from one end of the country to the other," like "from Dan to Beersheba," in Palestine.

[2] Mehemet Ali rode 85 miles in 11 hours on a dromedary—from Suez to Cairo—and one of his slaves ran alongside all the way, holding on by a cord.

[3] Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 89. See Exod. xiii. 18; "harnessed" may mean "armed," "in battle array," "girt for the journey," or, as the margin of our Bibles reads it, "by fives in a rank."

They had gained their freedom without bloodshed ; the first people who had valued liberty so highly ;[1] the unconscious champions, for all future ages, of the inalienable rights and dignity of man.

The vast host presently started from Rameses, under Moses, the earliest proclaimer of the essential equality of all races and ranks. He was virtually king, but he disdained the ambition of the name. His office brought with it immeasurable difficulties. These tens of thousands of freshly emancipated slaves, only a few of whom understood the mighty work that had been done for them, followed their leader, glad to escape from the lash of the drivers ; but only to murmur at their first difficulty on the morrow. Such a people, migrating in mass, he had to lead through the desert to the Land of Promise, caring for them and training their minds and hearts ! Out of a horde he had to form a nation ; conquering a home for it, giving it social and religious laws, and making it fit for a noble national life. Nor could he reckon on much help in this gigantic task. The tribe of Levi, to which he belonged, was the only one on whose intelligent aid he could rely.[2]

The scene must have been strange. Leaving behind them the shining forest of granite obelisks before the great temple of Amon Ra, glancing back perhaps at the gilt copper roof of the palace, at the soft flowing river, with its multitudinous sails, at the long streets, the avenue of sphinxes and gigantic statues, with that of Rameses towering over all to a hundred feet in height, all of one stone, and at the great clumps of palms overshadowing the wide plain on which Tanis lay, they streamed out towards Pithom ; a crowd seemingly endless and boundless ; some of them men who had amassed large

[1] Graetz, vol. i. p. 20. [2] Graetz, p. 30.

property and had great herds and flocks, but the vast majority poor creatures whose lives had been passed in clay hovels which a kick would bring down about them. The Egyptians were for a moment unable to check the flight. The men with their heads shaved, in universal mourning for the death of their first-born; the women with ashes strewn on their foreheads in grief at the terrible calamity in every household, could only wail and curse, or content themselves by a massacre of such of the hated race as from age or sickness or accident failed to escape with the rest. It was a night never to be forgotten by that or any future generation.

Yet, at first, all went well. Grateful wonder at the goodness of Jehovah, intense anxiety to escape from the hated oppressor, joyful trust in their leader, and bright hopes of the future, had roused the long-enslaved masses to a wondrous energy, and the sight of the thousands on every side must have awakened a new sense of power. No dread of future sufferings or dangers yet threw its shadow over them. They had still fresh water and rich fodder for their cattle, and the way was still open before them. The one thought in every bosom was Canaan—the land "flowing with milk and honey"—theirs by the promise of God; and their one tacit demand, that they should be led thither at once. This wish seemed to be granted, when, after a brief rest, the vast host entered on the direct road to Palestine, and at the close of a march north-east, of about fifteen miles, apparently in the line of the fresh-water canal to the Bitter Sea, encamped at Pithom, the Hebrew name of which was Succoth, "the tents." Water had been within reach all the way, but many of the women must already have fallen behind; children must have been exhausted and ill, and the cattle must have been jaded. Amidst all this, moreover, faint-heartedness

crept over the men as they thought of the great fortified wall before them, and that they would presently contend with the swords of well-trained soldiers, whose very sticks had hitherto made them tremble. Pithom, the city of the great god Tûm, had been built by their brethren, who were eagerly awaiting their approach to join their vast encampment when at last they rested on the broad level outside the town. The vast store-houses built by them for Pharaoh, and filled with every kind of provision for the army, may, very probably, have been stormed and plundered by the mob, for the few Egyptian soldiers guarding them could easily be overpowered, at such a time of distraction, by the rush of numbers; and from those vast victualling places, tens of thousands of measures of wheat and barley, rye and dourah, lentils, dates, and onions could easily be taken, for sustenance hereafter. Sacks, pitchers, skins, kneading-troughs, jars, cloths of all kinds would serve to let down the treasures from the opening on the roofs, by which access was obtained to them, cords or ladders helping the plunderers to get them safely to the ground. Thousands of lanterns would be gleaming everywhere that night to light the revolting Hebrews to their eager labours; but, after all, they were only a vast horde of peasants and labourers, well-nigh unarmed. There would be no lack of axes, staves, sickles, and brazen pikes, or of heavy poles, or slings, familiar to them as the weapon of shepherds against the wild beasts of the desert; but of bows and arrows, the musketry of those ages, they had none. No wonder, therefore, that their excitement was mingled with alarm. Fortresses guarded all the eastern frontier, before them, from the days of Abraham, and these were skilfully provided with scarp and counterscarp, ditch and glacis, and manned by

the best troops of Egypt, with sentinels pacing the ramparts along their whole length day and night. Nor was the prospect beyond this terrible barrier cheerful, for the whole Philistine plain was very probably held, at this time, by Egyptian garrisons, since we have a representation of the siege of Ascalon by Rameses II., and know, incidentally, that Palestine had been, for ages, virtually an Egyptian province.

Khetam, or, as the Hebrews wrote the word, Etham, was the Egyptian name of a range of strongholds defending the gates and weak places of Shur, the great frontier wall; and the nearest and largest of these was within a few hours of Pithom-Succoth. There is on the walls of the Temple of Karnak a picture of Seti I., father of Rameses II., returning victorious from Syria, and welcomed with wild rejoicings at one of the great castle-like gates of this fortified barrier. It is the one which protected a canal, cut, perhaps, as early as B.C. 4000, through the Isthmus of Suez, and thus anticipating the triumph of Lesseps by nearly sixty centuries. When the present canal was being dug, a fresh-water canal, to supply the wants of the countless labourers, was excavated from the Nile to the line of the projected works; and this, as it advanced, struck into the bed of the ancient Egyptian Canal, which, in some parts, may still be seen as a deep hollow, near the site of Pithom-Succoth. What the country was in these old days may again, as I have said, be imagined from the results of this modern introduction of water to it, for the Wady Tumilat, through which it passes, has been transformed from the awful desolation in which it had lain for perhaps thousands of years, into a fruitful tract of gardens and fields.

Moses had apparently intended to launch the vast multitudes behind him on the nearest fort, trusting that the sud-

denness and impetuosity of the attack might sweep away the garrison and permit the Hebrews to pass out to the direct road towards the Promised Land. The sufferings of the march from Tanis had, already, damped the spirits of most, and it was clear that to lead the assault against the fortress while this gloom prevailed could only lead to a fruitless butchery of thousands.

All this Moses and the other leaders felt still more deeply, when, on the next day, the vast throng moved nearer the fortified wall. From afar they could see the great fort rising gaunt and bare from the stony soil, with no relief of even a single palm or shrub to soften its outline; its wooden stockade, its ramparts, its scarped walls, its watch-tower looking westward, the broad, flat roof swarming with soldiers. Out from the scarped walls, moreover, a platform projected to hinder the use of scaling ladders, and along this were ranged armed men, at close intervals, for the garrison no doubt had already heard of the revolt of the Hebrews, and were on the watch to prevent their escape. Every man would be at his post, and on the roof the gong-men would be placed ready to give the alarm with their heavy wooden mallets on the huge gongs, if an attack were begun. It was clearly impossible to force the gate thus watchfully and strongly defended. Among the Hebrews, at the sight of such an insurmountable barrier in their way,[1] fear grew louder, and though they were still on Egyptian soil, voices were heard regretting that they had not remained slaves rather than follow Moses, to die in the desert.[2]

Their great leader, however, knew not only the character of his countrymen, but also the relations of Egypt with the

[1] *Joshua*, by Georg Ebers, gives vivid pictures of the Exodus.
[2] Exod. xiv. 12.

kings of Palestine, and had foreseen what had now happened. He knew that he would be attacked, not only by the garrisons of the frontier Egyptian fortresses, but, ere long, even if these were overpowered, by the princes of southern Canaan, who, whether allied with the Pharaoh or not, would assuredly fall upon a vast migration of escaped slaves and shepherds, seeking a new home. He was, indeed, virtually between two armies, even were he to succeed in breaking through the frontier wall, for the Egyptian chariot soldiery could soon overtake him. He would then have them and the forces of Palestine on his front and rear, and must be destroyed; since, however numerous the crowds that followed him, they were not an army, but a people cumbered with women and children. He knew the disciplined array he would have to face, and the want of training, the insubordination, and the over-confident rashness of those he had to lead. Even thus soon, they had revealed their obstinacy, selfishness, and conceit; their want of discipline and of moral strength. In the comparatively small limits of an ordinary caravan the strictest order must be maintained at the pitching or striking of the tents. The presence of women and children may, indeed, elicit the best characteristics of some; but, on the other hand, perverseness, selfishness, coarseness, and vice show themselves grossly. The tent-pins will not hold in every soil; a tent cannot be raised without a neighbour's help; where water for large numbers is to be had only from one spring, strict order must be kept, and the thirsty willingly abide their turn, if quarrels are to be avoided; when pasture is insufficient for the herds, every shepherd seeks to get a good strip for his cattle, if necessary, by force; and the property of all is exposed before or in the tents. If everything be not ready at the right hour when

the tents are struck, either all are delayed, or those who linger behind must be abandoned. But if this be the case with a small body, how much worse would it be with 3,000,000 of people? The camps at Succoth and Etham, in spite of all tribal separation and sub-division, must have been a chaotic confusion of men, women, children, and cattle, which no leader could reduce to order.[1] No wonder, therefore, that the mingled evil of the mass broke out in murmurs and unmanly regrets. It was partly on this account, no doubt, that they were led, not "through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, 'Lest, peradventure the people repent when they see war, and return to Egypt;' but made to turn (from before the Wall) towards the way of the wilderness of the Weedy (Red) Sea; though they went up in battle array from the land of Egypt."

They had, indeed, set out full of hope that they would soon reach and, if necessary, conquer the Promised Land, and had struck into the well-known road to Palestine, with no foreboding of the weary years they would have to spend in the wilderness, or of the graves awaiting nearly all of them there, or of the difficulties through which their children were to reach the longed-for goal. Moses could give them no hint of his plans, for had they known them they would assuredly have returned to the Nile valley. He had led them to the frontier fortresses, and now that they stormily clamoured for their old life of slavery, rather than face the death that threatened them, he could cheer them by the intimation that they would not have to fight; as God had another, less dangerous road for them, towards the Red Sea. He had first to lead them out of Egypt with as little loss as

[1] *Durch Gosen*, pp. 94-96. [2] Exod. xiii. 17 (literally).

possible, and then to train them to discipline, order, and worthy aims in life. This point reached, they could receive intelligently the full revelations destined for them, and be led victoriously to Palestine. Escape from Egypt lay near at hand, but their education as a people could only be attained by the long work of years, after they had received the laws they were to obey.

Turning therefore[1] to the south, at some miles distance from the frontier wall, the multitude hastened on, in fear of the Egyptian troops; and, in hope of speedy escape from them, pressed forward without taking more rest than was needed to refresh them. At last they reached a spot—Pi-hahiroth—"the place where the reeds grow,"[2] over against Baal-zephon, as the grand limestone mountains of the Ataka range behind Suez were called by the Phœnician sailors.[3] There they could pitch their tents, and take much-needed rest, amidst springs of fresh water and abundant pastures. They had turned the great frontier wall with its line of forts, and were safe for the time. For the moment they had escaped any conflict with disciplined troops.

Their advance to the fortress wall, and their subsequent apparent retreat, and disappearance in the wilderness, had had the additional result of deceiving the Egyptians, and leading them to suppose that Moses had lost his way, or had given up his design of breaking through to the east, and was now wandering in the desert. The garrisons of all the frontier forts must have been informed of the approach of vast masses of people, and would be on the watch; doubtless preparing themselves for an expected attack, and very possibly filling the Hebrews with terror by the blare of their

[1] Exod. xiv. 2.

[2] Gesenius, 9th ed., p. 684. But see meaning in Brugsch, p. 194.

[3] Ebers, *Durch Gosen*, p. 98.

trumpets, resounding afar over the silent desert. Uncertain where the attempt to break out would be made, they would remain under arms, vainly awaiting assault, and would send off posts to Pharaoh, at Tanis, begging for reinforcements, and telling him that the advancing hordes had disappeared in the desert, to the south-west. It was natural, therefore, that he should believe that they had become entangled and lost in the wilderness.[1]

The messages brought him must have shown Menephtah at once that Moses had now altogether different intentions from merely going off into the desert to sacrifice; and the loss of such a vast multitude of slaves came back on him in all its force. "Why have we done this," said he, "that we have let Israel go from serving us?"[2] He had permitted a pilgrimage to the wilderness to hold a religious feast, with the utmost reluctance, when he could not help it; but now that the Hebrews were evidently bent on flight, they must be hindered by all the means in his power. They had had a lengthened start of him, but his cavalry could soon overtake them. Ordering his own war chariots, therefore, and 600 selected chariots besides, as his immediate escort; supported by all the chariot-force of Lower Egypt, with fighting men in each, and his "horsemen,"[3] he started in hot haste after the Hebrews.

Under Menephtah, the chariot force of the army had been more assiduously encouraged than under any other of the Pharaohs. The name of one of his "Heads of the Horse" is still preserved; a "chief prophet" of Set, and general of

[1] Exod. xiv. 3. [2] Exod. xiv. 5.

[3] From "horsemen" being mentioned separately it would seem that, though not named on the monuments, there were cavalry, in our sense, in the Egyptian army. Diodorus Siculus says that Rameses II. had 24,000 horse soldiers besides his chariot regiments.

the gendarmerie, who lived at Tanis, the city from which Menephtah now set out. The Delta—that is, the former Hebrew district—was in fact the breeding place of the

Egyptian War Chariot. From "*L'Egypte*"—*Antiquités*. They generally had two riders: one to drive, the other to fight.

chariot horses, for which its open flatness and its pastures especially suited it. Menephtah's chariot squadrons were his glory, and are constantly mentioned, for their deeds in

the field, in the long inscription at Karnak which commemorates his victory over the Libyans and their allies.[1]

Some time, during which he remained inactive, must, however, have intervened between the departure of the Hebrews and the pursuit. The piety of the Egyptians to the dead was so great that the weightiest political affairs would necessarily be neglected while the king paid the last honours to his dead son. Besides, in this case, the families of the officers and soldiery had also been universally bereaved. Seventy to seventy-two days were required for public lamentation,[2] and during this time all else would be forgotten by the Pharaoh. It was not till ten weeks after death that the mummy was put in its resting place, with the needful rites detailed in the Book of the Dead. Till then all was at a standstill. Loud wailing rose in the public streets at the moment of death; the forehead was covered with dust or mud, and the head smitten by the hands as a sign of deepest sorrow. When the corpse was opened at the embalming house, the relatives were required to be present. The embalmers then went to their doleful work, not later than the third day, and the family, meanwhile, shut themselves up in strict seclusion till the process was completed, over two months later.[3]

But if Menephtah was thus forced to give the Hebrews a lengthened breathing time, during which they in a measure organized themselves, while resting in the comparatively rich tract round Pi-hahiroth, his pursuit was now so much the hotter. Launching his magnificent squadrons after the

[1] Lepsius' *Denkmäler*, vol. iii. p. 199. Dümichen, *Historische Inschriften*, Taf. i.–v. Chabas, *Études*, etc. Thus it says, "He sent his cavalry in all directions." "His Majesty with his cavalry attacked them." "He sent the cavalry after them," and so on.

[2] Herod., ii. 85. Diod., i. 72, 90. Gen. l. 3.

[3] *Uarda*, vol. i. p. 37. *Ægypt. Königstochter*, vol. iii. p. 275.

prey: "the horses," to use the words of an old papyrus,[1] "swift as jackals; their eyes like fire; their fury like that of a hurricane when it bursts:" the doom of the Hebrews seemed fixed. The fugitives had at last broken up their encampment and were marching slowly towards the Red Sea, which they designed to reach in the afternoon, at the ebb tide.[2] The murmur of the waves on the beach was already heard when the clouds of dust on the horizon behind told them they were pursued. Terror seized the host once more at the sight, and fierce accusations of Moses were mingled with loud despair of escape. But the great leader, ever calm in the presence of danger, kept the alarm from degenerating into ruinous panic. "Jehovah will fight for you," said he to the terrified crowds, "and ye shall be still;" words which shone out on the despairing multitudes, to use the fine figure of Ebers, "like the sun rising in calm majesty on the lost and almost spent traveller."[3]

The van of the pursuers was already in sight from the shore. The danger was great, but Jehovah had heard the cry of Moses, and ordered the vast host to go forward, though the waters apparently barred their way; promising that, at the uplifted rod of His servant, the waves would be divided and offer a broad pathway on dry ground.[4]

The exact locality at which the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea appears to be more nearly pointed out than in the past, by the results of recent investigation. Pi-hahiroth may be a place called Pikaheret in an inscription found near Tel-el-Maskhuta, on the railway line to Suez from Cairo, and also

[1] *Anast.*, I. [2] *Durch Gosen*, p. 101.

[3] *Durch Gosen*, p. 101. No taunt could be more bitter than that used, "Because there are no graves in Egypt hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?" Exod. xiv. 11. Egypt was the land of graves, and especially round Memphis the cemeteries were of immense extent. [4] Exod. xiv. 26.

close to the fresh-water canal, which runs near the line a great part of the way. It is near the canal which in antiquity led from the Nile to the Red Sea, over nearly the same track as the present fresh-water one, but Ebers places Pi-hahiroth much nearer the Red Sea. The Hebrews, according to the latest study of the question, appear to have marched, after turning from the great wall, towards the waters, then much broader than now, which are called Lake Timsah, or "Lake of Crocodiles," a small spot of water, two or three miles across, and seven or eight miles long, about forty-five miles in a straight line from Suez, and now used as part of the channel of the Suez Canal. North of this a few miles, just beyond the town of Ismailia, is the highest point on the isthmus, which has always been dry land, connecting Africa with Asia. Over this lay the road from Tanis to Philistia, and also to the Gulf of Akaba; in fact, to the east generally. The first march of the Hebrews seems to have been towards this high road to the lands beyond, above the present Lake Timsah; but the sight and thought of the fortress on the wall alarmed the multitude, and they turned to the south, past the present Bitter Lakes, which, also, are utilized for the Suez Canal. Here they were beyond the great wall with its castles, for the waters were now a sufficient defence of the Nile valley. But they found themselves still in a sore strait, for the range of the Ataka mountains rose to the south, on the African side of their march, while before them and at their side were the waters of the Bitter Lakes, then part of the Red Sea, and behind them were to be, very soon, the chariots of Pharaoh. What was to be done?

"To the north of the Gulf of Suez, and extending ten statute miles to the Bitter Lakes, there exists at the present day a neck of land, across which the Israelitish host might

have marched into the wilderness of Etham, on their way to Mount Sinai, and over which the army of Pharaoh, with its chariots, would probably have been unable to follow. . . . Ever since the Pliocene period, down to very recent times, the land has been gaining on the sea, over this area. At the Pliocene period the whole of Lower Egypt and the borders of the Mediterranean were submerged to a depth of at least 200 feet below the present sea-level, and since then the land has been slowly rising. It is not too much to assume that 4,000 years ago the process of elevation had not been completed to its present extent; and that, in consequence, the waters of the Gulf of Suez stretched northward into the Bitter Lakes, forming a channel, perhaps of no great depth, but requiring the exercise of Almighty power to convert it into a causeway of dry land, in order to rescue the chosen people from their impending peril. The levels taken for the Suez Canal show that a depression of about 25 feet would suffice to bring the waters of the Gulf of Suez into the Bitter Lakes, and this submergence would still leave the neck to the north of the Bitter Lakes in the position in which we know it to have been in the times of the Pharaohs, when the road between Egypt and the East ran over it." [1]

This geological fact seems to point to the shallow head of the ancient Red Sea, now occupied in part by the Bitter Lakes, as most probably the place at which the Hebrews crossed, for Suez in the days of Moses would be under a very deep body of water. I have, myself, been both at Lake Timsah and Suez, and feel assured that the ascertained elevation of the mud during the ages since the Exodus shows that the Bitter Lakes or their vicinity must have witnessed the amazing scene of the Hebrew crossing.

[1] Hull's *Mount Seir*, p. 176.

"Professor Hull," says Sir John Coode, the eminent engineer, "shows that the beds of sand and gravel containing shells, corals, and other marine forms now existing in the waters of the Gulf of Suez (which beds are found on either side of that gulf up to at least 200 feet above the present sea-level), form complete evidence of the elevation of the whole land area of that particular region, but that this elevation must have taken place at a time long antecedent to that of the Exodus. He points out, what is true, that if at the time of the Exodus an elevation of not more than from 25 to 30 feet had remained to be effected, the land now forming the southern part of the Isthmus of Suez would have been submerged by the waters of the Red Sea, and he regards it as in the highest degree probable that as far back as the time when the Exodus took place the waters of the Red Sea extended northwards up the valley at least as far as the Bitter Lakes, producing a channel 20 to 30 feet in depth, and perhaps a mile in breadth—a terrible barrier to the Israelites, and sufficient to induce a cry of despair from the whole multitude.

"Having quite recently traversed the whole isthmus, making a special examination of the portion between Ismailia and Suez, the following incident, which then occurred, appears to me to be worthy of notice, inasmuch as it is eminently corroborative of Dr. Hull's view.

"Whilst engaged with other members of the International Commission upon the investigation of various matters connected with the question of improving the Suez Canal, some of our party landed from time to time, and on one occasion at a point between what is now the north end of the Gulf of Suez and the south of the Bitter Lakes—not, in fact, very far to the north of the bridge of

boats by which the pilgrims to and from Mecca cross the canal.

"Desiring to test for myself the character and hardness of the unbroken ground at this point, and at a height of about 12 or 15 feet above sea-level, the first stroke of a pick turned up, from three inches below the surface, a thick cake of a dull white substance which at the moment appeared to be gypsum; and, whilst stooping to pick it up, I remarked that accordingly, but simultaneously, a colleague who was standing at my side, exclaimed 'salt.' On asking him how it came to pass that he so instantly arrived at this conclusion, he replied that the whole district thereabouts was full of such salt.

"When it is explained that this gentleman had the engineering charge of a considerable length of this part of the Suez Canal at the time the work was in course of construction, and consequently had thus acquired an intimate knowledge of this district, and also that on testing the ground at other points thereabouts I found salt existing below a thin covering of sand, at heights considerably above the sea-level, there is ample warrant for saying, as I have done, that the extensive existence of salt in this form and at such a height cannot be regarded otherwise than as a proof that the waters of the Red Sea did at one time extend as far north as the Bitter Lakes. A specimen nearly an inch thick is before me as I write.

"Further evidence that, at some period antecedent to the formation of the Suez Canal, the sea extended as far up the isthmus as the Bitter Lakes is found in a remarkable sample of salt, which was cut from the bottom of the Bitter Lakes by the engineers of the Suez Canal Company, before the sea was let in to effect the completion of the water communi-

cation between the northern and southern sections of the work. This block of salt, to which my attention was directed by M. de Lesseps, is preserved in the courtyard attached to the offices of the canal company at Ismailia; it is fully seven feet in height, and, according to M. Voisin Bey, who, at the time it was taken out, acted as the company's chief engineer in Egypt, salt certainly existed to a still greater depth, but to what precise extent is not known.

"I may here mention that whilst passing over the 1,500 miles from the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb to Suez, the water of the Red Sea is so far changed by evaporation, that samples taken from the surface at Suez have been proved to be nearly two parts in 1,000 salter than those at Bab-el-Mandeb. It should be borne in mind, moreover, that an exceptionally great amount of evaporation would necessarily take place within such a comparatively shallow inland basin as that of the Bitter Lakes, having its surface swept by the hot, dry air of the Arabian desert, and shut in from the Mediterranean by the high land at Serapeum immediately to the north, or, at any rate, by the still higher ridge of country at El-Guin. These conditions would obviously contribute to the formation of such a remarkable deposit of salt as is found in the specimen above described.

"A peculiar feature in this specimen is the presence of an occasional thin layer of sand, most probably caused during the prevalence of violent southerly winds which from time to time raise the sea-level at Suez nearly three feet above that of an ordinary spring tide in calm weather. The strong current to the northward on such occasions would be certain to carry a considerable quantity of sand into the Bitter Lakes, sufficient, it may be assumed, to account for the layers of sand in question.

"The facts to which I have here called attention appear to me unquestionably to confirm the view entertained by Professor Hull. I feel, with him, that, according to this view, the physical conditions at the time of the Exodus will be brought into harmony with the Bible narrative, and that the difficulty which has hitherto surrounded the subject of the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea will thus have been to a great degree removed."[1]

If the present Bay of Suez was thus so deeply submerged in the time of Moses, and the Red Sea extended to near Ismaila, we need no longer trouble ourselves about the instances recorded of individuals having succeeded, under special circumstances, in crossing Suez. It is not now what it was then, but has been raised proportionately as much as the rest of the Isthmus. Had the position of land and sea been the same as at this period, it would have been possible for the Israelites to cross into Arabia Petræa without the interposition of God.

It is pleasant to read in so acute a writer as Niebuhr: "It would be a great mistake to imagine that the passage of such a great caravan (as the Israelites) could have been effected by purely natural means. No caravans go this way nowadays, at least from Cairo to Sinai, though it would be a great saving of distance if they could. But it was even less possible for the children of Israel to cross thus thousands of years ago, for the water was then apparently much broader, and, besides reaching farther to the north, was far deeper. The water seems not only to have retreated since, but the bottom of this shallow point appears to have been raised by the sand blown in for ages from the desert."[2]

The night set in dark and stormy, with a violent north-

[1] Sir John Coode, *Letter to the Times*.

[2] *Beschreibung von Arabia*, p. 411.

east gale,[1] which blew all night, and drove back the waters till the sandy and shallow bottom was laid bare. The storm, prolonging the ebb, delayed the flow of the tide, and thus before morning, the whole of the Hebrews—here, going round pools, there, kept back by the tempest, and by the slow progress of the cattle—were able to reach the east shore; after a long struggle, aggravated by the terrors of the night. What these must have been may be imagined from the description in one of the Psalms, ages after:

> "The clouds poured out water:
> The skies sent out a sound:
> Thine arrows (the lightnings) also went abroad.
> The voice of Thy thunder rolled along the heavens,[2]
> The lightnings lightened the world:
> The earth trembled and shook." [3]

The pursuing Egyptians reached the strand when most of the Hebrews, with their cattle, had crossed in safety. It was a question whether they should at once dash after them, or seek to overtake them by the circuit of the shore. Man and horse were tired out by the forced marches of the last few days, and the night was impenetrably dark. Since their advance to the great wall with its fortresses, Jehovah had vouchsafed to guide His people by a cloud through the day and fire by night,[4] as Eastern armies still follow, in many cases, signals of fire and smoke seen at the front of the march.[5] This light, which the Pharaoh perhaps fancied

[1] It is to be remembered that the Hebrews gave names only to the four winds from the four cardinal points, so that north-east and south-east, the winds employed by Jehovah in this case, would be regarded as east winds.

[2] Gesenius says, "was in the whirlwind."

[3] Ps. lxxvii. 17, 18.

[4] Exod. xiii. 21.

[5] Alexander the Great had a huge cresset set up on a tall pole over his tent as a signal for departure, seen far off by all, by its light in darkness and its smoke by day. Curtius, v. 2. On the march the holy fire was always carried before the army on silver altars. Curtius, iii. 2. Seetzen quotes from an old Arab MS. the fact that

such a signal, now moved from before the Hebrews and came to their rear,[1] at once quickening and guiding laggards and stragglers, and misleading the Egyptians as to the progress made by the host. Thinking that the storm would keep back the waters, and seeing their prey so near, passion overcame prudence in the pursuers. Their squadrons, therefore, rushed to the edge of the channel, rank pressing on rank after those who claimed to know the way, towards the light which they might well fancy marked the leader's place, at the front. Meanwhile, according to Josephus,[2] a terrible storm of rain, with dreadful thunder and lightning, broke out, and helped, with the loud and fierce wind, to bewilder the charioteers; who, it may be, were led still more astray by different signal fires of the sections of the Hebrews, kindled as a flaming banner, to guide their divisions in the wild blackness. But, now, when the host of the Egyptians were floundering in the dangerous sands to the ford, the wind suddenly veered round, and blew towards the north instead of from it; driving before it the foaming waters of the rising tide. Advance was henceforth hopeless, but so, also, was retreat, for the narrow wheels of the chariots sank in the water-soaked bottom, and bent or snapped the axles,[3] hurling the charioteers headlong from their places, to use the metaphor in the sacred text, like stones from a sling.

the caliphs used fire to send news swiftly—the brightness serving this end by night and the smoke by day. The vast pilgrim caravans to Mecca, guide themselves in a similar way. An Egyptian general, in an ancient inscription, is compared to a flame streaming in advance of an army, and this is repeated in an old papyrus. Chabas, *V. E.*, p. 54. *Pap. Anast.*, I.

[1] Exod. xiv. 19, 20. The Peshito reads, "And there were clouds and darkness all the night, but there was light to the children of Israel all the night." The Septuagint reads, "There arose clouds and darkness, and the night passed," etc.

[2] Jos., *Ant.*, II. xvi. 3.

[3] The Septuagint reads that the wheels were "bound" or "clogged" by the sand.

Mortal terror now seized the pursuers; for the God of the Hebrews was "looking out on them," and once more fighting against them from that fiery cloud.[1] But escape was impossible. The south-west wind blowing wildly from the clefts and gorges of the Ataka hills—the wind most dreaded, in our own day, by the boatmen of Suez—drove the waters before it, and ere long the chariots and the heavily mailed soldiery of Pharaoh, held in the remorseless grip of the yielding sands, were overwhelmed, and miserably perished. Next morning all was over, and the triumphant Hebrews saw the corpses washed up, in heaps, along the sea-shore. Such a deliverance filled all minds with awe, for they felt that Jehovah alone had inflicted this great defeat upon their enemies. Now, as never before, they feared and believed in Him, and in his servant Moses.[2]

A document translated by M. Chabas may perhaps refer to the escape of the Hebrews. It runs thus: "Notice! when my letter reaches you, bring the Madjai at once, who were over the foreign Safkhi who have escaped. Do not bring all the men I have named in my list. Give attention

[1] Exod. xiv. 24. Translate "troubled" as "threw into confusion."

[2] Exod. xiv. 30, 31. The name of the Red Sea, really, the Weedy Sea, Yam Suph, is supposed by Stickel (*Studien u. Kritiken*, 1850, p. 330) to be derived from the woolly tuft of the ripe shore reed, which grows very thickly on the edge of the sea. It was called in Egypt the Reedy Sea. On the other hand, I have lately met the following proposed derivation: "As we emerged from the mouth of a small defile the waters of this sacred gulf (the Red Sea) burst upon our view; the surface marked with annular, crescent-shaped, and irregular blotches of a purplish red, extending as far as the eye could reach. . . . This red colour I ascertained to be caused by the subjacent red sandstone and reddish coral reefs. A similar phenomenon is observed in the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, and also near Suez, particularly when the rays of the sun fall on the water at a small angle." The late Captain Newbold, in *Journ. of Royal Asiatic Soc.*, No. XIII. p. 78. The Hebrews divided the night into three watches: the first from sunset to ten; the second from ten to two; the third from two to sunrise. The passage of the sea was in April, when the sun rose about six A.M. Rosenmüller, *Alte u. Neue Morgenland*, vol. ii. p. 18. Munk thinks the passage was effected at some part of the Bitter Lakes, not far from Ismailia. *Palästina*, 269.

to this. Bring them to me to Takhu, and I will admit them and you." Takhu was a fortress which defended the eastern frontier of the Delta, and this letter may well be an order to recall the gendarmerie who had watched the wall when the Hebrews were advancing to it.[1]

It is, of course, idle to expect that Egypt would record a disaster so terrible as that of the Red Sea, but a papyrus of the next period strangely confirms its magnitude, by showing the virtual breaking up of the kingdom of the Pharaohs from that date. The events of the later period of Menephtah's reign are passed over in perfect silence[2] by the monuments. After him, the empire which Seti I. and Rameses II. had established at so great a cost of war and energy, went ignominiously to pieces, and his successors, Seti II. and Menephtah II., could not prevent even single counties of the Delta from breaking loose from their rule, declaring themselves independent, and setting up dynasties of their own. The great Harris Papyrus says of this time: "The population of Egypt had broken away over the borders, and among those who remained there was no commanding voice, for many years. Hence Egypt fell under dynasties which ruled the towns. One killed the other in wild and fatal enterprises. Other disasters succeeded, in the shape of years of famine. Then Aarsu, a Syrian, rose among them, as prince, and the whole land did him homage. One leagued with the other and plundered the magazines, and the very gods acted as men did"—that is, they seemed to waste the earth by their judgments.

In Menephtah's eighth regnal year a report was sent to him saying that "the passage of tribes of the Shasu (or Bedouins) from the land of Edom had been effected through

[1] *Pap. Anast.*, V. 18, 6, pl. 19, 2. [2] Brugsch, vol. ii. p. 130.

the fortress of Khetam (Etham) which is situated in (the district of) Succoth (Thuku) to the lakes of the city of Pithom, which are in the land of Succoth, in order that they might feed themselves and their herds on the possessions of Pharaoh." But this must refer to an inroad, from the desert without, on the fertile pastures of the Delta round Pithom : not to an exodus of any kind. The mummies of Seti, Rameses, and other kings of the dynasty have been found, but no mummy of Menephtah !

CHAPTER VII.

THE MARCH TO SINAI.

How long the Hebrews remained in Egypt has been much disputed. It is stated by St. Paul that from the date of the covenant with Abraham, to the proclamation of the Mosaic law on Sinai, was 430 years,[1] and this is stated also in Exodus.[2] In Genesis[3] the Egyptians are predicted as destined to afflict the Hebrews 400 years, and this is repeated by St. Stephen in his defence.[4] Respecting these two numbers, 430 and 400 years, there is little difficulty, as the one is only a round number, whilst the other is a precise statement. But in Genesis[5] it is said that the return to Canaan was to be in the fourth generation from the time of God's covenant with Abraham ; so that an average of over 100 years is thus presumed for each. Jewish interpreters, however, assuming the length of a generation as only about 50 years, have divided the longer period into two ; allotting 215 years to the interval between the descent of Abraham to Egypt and that of Jacob, and the same time to the residence there of his posterity. But this is not necessary, if we remember the length of life assigned in the Bible to the patriarchs, for Abraham himself died at the age of 175,[6] Isaac at that of 180,[7] Jacob at that of 147,[8] Joseph at that of 110, and

[1] Gal. iii. 17. [2] Exod. xii. 40, 41. [3] Gen. xv. 13.
[4] Acts vii. 6. [5] Gen. xv. 16. [6] Gen. xxv. 7.
[7] Gen. xxxv. 28.
[8] *Dict. of Bible*, art. "Jacob." Schenkel's *Lex.* makes him 170.

Moses at that of 120.[1] It is hardly to be expected that evidence in corroboration of such matters should be accessible from outside sources, but on many Egyptian inscriptions we still meet with the prayer which very few would think of offering now, that the writer may reach the perfect age of 110 years; and in a papyrus, preserved in Paris, of the date of the Twelfth Dynasty,[2] that is, at least as old as Abraham, one Patah-hotep, who describes himself as 110 years old, speaks of his father, the reigning king, as still alive, and, indeed, addresses him; so that he must have been about 130 years old.[3]

Their miraculous escape had raised the excitable spirit of the vast host to a delirium of joy. From the extremity of peril they had passed, in a night, to safety. An almost helpless multitude, cumbered with women, children, and cattle, with the sea before them and the terrible chariots of Egypt behind—they had seen a way made for them through the waters, and the chivalry of the greatest empire in the world overwhelmed when pressing after them. They had been simply spectators of the great deliverance wrought for them by the invisible God, whom Moses had proclaimed as their Leader, and whom their fathers had worshipped. There was no room for pride: they could only look with grateful eyes to the heavens, from which alone their rescue had come. Jehovah was assuredly a God above all gods, and He had proclaimed them His chosen people, by redeeming them thus with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Such an event, which distant ages would remember with lasting awe, demanded a corresponding recogni-

[1] Deut. xxxiv. 7.

[2] Maspero, p. 85. Brugsch, vol. 1. p. 92.

[3] *Facsimile d'un Papyrus Egyptien.* Par M. Prisse d'Avennes. Pl. 19, lines 7 and 8.

tion from those who had witnessed it. The emotion that filled all hearts could find adequate utterance only in song and public rejoicing, in honour of their divine Protector.

The sacred dance was a part of most ancient religions. Even now the young women of Egypt thus greet the rising of the Nile—a relic of the old sacred festival of the river. The Indians, in antiquity, danced before the rising sun, in his honour, and sacred dances were in use among the Romans. Indeed, the Greek Church stills retains at Easter some traces of this antique form of worship, and the dancing dervishes of Turkey and Central Asia are well known. It seemed, in fact, to the ancient world as fitting to express their joy thus as by singing, to which it appeared the natural adjunct, expressive of the gladness of the worshipper's whole being.[1] It is not surprising, therefore, that the Hebrew word for a religious festival means, literally, a circling dance,[2] or that when Moses asked Pharaoh to let the people go, to hold a feast to Jehovah in the wilderness, the word refers to this chief characteristic of such festivities.[3] The deliverance of the nation, by the direct intervention of Jehovah in its behalf, was hence naturally celebrated by a solemn festival in His honour, in which sacred dances took a prominent part. But the dance was always an accompaniment to song, and this was provided in the grand lyric known as the Song of Moses—the oldest and noblest triumphal ode we possess. It ran thus:[4]

[1] Exod. xxxii. 6. There are still, at fixed times, sacred dances in the Cathedral of Seville, as part of the public worship.

[2] Hag, in Gesenius, 9th edition, p. 252.

[3] Exod. v. 1. It is the same in Lev. xxiii. 41, "Ye shall keep a *feast* (or 'dance') unto Jehovah seven days in the year." In Ps. xlii 4, "The multitude that kept holy day," is literally, "that celebrated religious dances."

[4] See translations of Koster (*Studien u. Kritiken*, 1831, p. 69), Knobel, Ewald, Herder, Bunsen, and Kalisch.

I will sing to Jehovah, for He hath triumphed gloriously;[1]
The horse and its rider hath He hurled[2] into the sea.
Jehovah is my Victory and Song: He is my deliverer;
He is my God, I will praise Him;
The God of my fathers, I will exalt Him!

Jehovah is a hero of war: Jehovah is His name!
The chariots of Pharaoh and his Might He cast into the sea:
His chosen captains[3] were drowned in the Weedy Sea.
The depths covered them;
They sank to the bottom like a stone.[4]

Thy right hand, O Jehovah, glorious in power,
Thy right hand, O Jehovah, broke in pieces the foe.

In the greatness of Thy excellency Thou hast overthrown them that opposed Thee,
Thou didst let loose Thy fiery indignation, and it consumed them like stubble.[5]

Before the breath of Thy nostrils[6] the waters piled themselves up;
The floods stood up like a dam—
The waves were congealed in the midst of the sea.

The foe said: "I will pursue: I will overtake:
I will divide the prey; I will glut my revenge on them,
I will draw out my sword, and destroy them."

Then thou breathedst with Thy wind; the sea covered them:
They whirled down, like lead, in the rushing waters.

Who is like unto Thee, among the gods, O Jehovah!
Who is like unto Thee; so great in Thy majesty!
So fearful in glory; doing such wondrous deeds!

[1] Literally, He is gloriously glorious. [2] As from a sling.

[3] Officers of the highest rank especially attending the Pharaoh.

[4] The weight of their armour would make them helpless to escape. The corselets of the officers were of bronze, with sleeves reaching nearly to the elbow, and covering the whole body, and the thighs nearly to the knees. The chariot warriors also are always represented with heavy coats of mail. Wilkinson, vol. i. p. 366.

[5] The word for stubble in the Hebrew text is Egyptian.

[6] A poetical expression for the natural agency of the stormy wind. All natural phenomena are thus ascribed by the Hebrews to the direct act of God -"God thunders,"—"God gives rain,"—"God giveth snow," etc.

Thou stretchedst out Thy right hand,
Then the earth swallowed them up.

Thou leddest by Thy grace the people whom Thou didst redeem,
Thou leddest them by Thy strength to Thy holy habitation.[1]
The peoples shall hear it and be afraid,
Trembling shall seize the inhabitants of Philistia.[2]

The princes of the tribes of Edom are in terror;
The mighty men[3] of Moab, trembling seizes them;

The inhabitants of Canaan melt for fear!
Fear and dread fall on them,
At the greatness of Thine arm they stiffen, in terror, like stone,
Till Thy people, O Jehovah, have passed over;[4]

Till Thy people, whom thou hast made Thine own, have passed over,
Till Thou hast brought them in, and planted them on the mount of Thine inheritance.[5]

The place, O Jehovah, which Thou hast made Thy dwelling;
The Sanctuary, O Jehovah, which Thy hands have prepared!

Jehovah is king for ever and ever!

For Pharaoh's horse, and his chariots, and his riders, went into the Sea,
And Jehovah brought back over them the waters;
But the children of Israel went on, dry, through the depths.

[1] Palestine.

[2] The first who would expect an invasion. Pelasheth, the country of the Philistines, is, as has been said, the original of the name Palestine.

[3] Literally, "the rams," a metaphor for strength, etc. See Jer. xlviii. 29, 41. The men of Moab were famous for their strength and size. The metaphor applies aptly to them as great "sheep-masters."

[4] The Jordan.

[5] Palestine, a country of hills, was holy to Jehovah, and is probably meant, as a whole, but the allusion may be to Mount Moriah, at Jerusalem: though it was not used for sacred purposes till after David bought the threshing-floor of Araunah, on it, and Solomon crowned it with his temple. In Isa. lxv. 9, Canaan is called by Jehovah, "My mountains." It is also called "that goodly mountain," Deut. iii. 25, and "this mountain," in Ps. lxxviii. 54. It is also called in that verse, "His Sanctuary," as in the Song of Moses, though the words may be translated, "His holy border."

The burden of this magnificent ode sank into the hearts of the Hebrew race, and fired the genius of inspired poets, century after century, reappearing again and again in psalm and prophecy.[1] As here, the strain of all these allusions to the great deliverance is, that "not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake."[2] Nor did its echoes die away with the Jewish dispensation. As a triumphant celebration of God's victory over His enemies, it is even transferred in the Apocalypse to those who stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire, having the harps of God, and singing "the song of Moses the servant of God, and of the Lamb."

Uttered first, in all probability, by a single voice, from some point which lifted the reciter above the vast multitude, its refrain was caught up by the women and maidens of Israel, and sung by them as they danced for joy, their tambourines held over their head, and struck in unison as they moved. Miriam,[3] the sister of Aaron and Moses, noblest as well as first of the daughters of the people, led the way, the whole chorus of sisters following, their right hands beating in time the skin disk of their simple instrument, round which rows of shells, or pieces of metal added to the joyful noise. Then would strike in the deep, solemn chorus of the men, every voice expressing, in its loudest chant, enthusiasm and gratitude for the wondrous deliverance vouchsafed. In one of the Psalms we have a glimpse of a scene in some respects similar: the rejoicings at the consecration of the Tabernacle erected by David. Then, "Singers went before;

[1] See Ps. lxxvii. 12-20; lxxviii.; cv.; cvi.; cxiv. [2] Ps. cxv. 1.

[3] Miriam is called a "prophetess," but this often means in Scripture only one who says or makes known the doings of God, or His praises, whether with or without musical instruments. Thus the singers appointed by David are called "prophets," and are said "to prophesy with harps," etc., and "to give thanks and to praise the Lord." 1 Chron. xxv. 1-3.

players on stringed instruments followed after, and, between, came damsels playing on timbrels.[1] In full choir, the sons and daughters of the Fountain of Israel praised God, even Jehovah;" [2] "David and all the House of Israel playing before Jehovah with all their might and with singing,[3] even on harps, and on psalteries, and on castanets,[4] and on cymbals."

Traditions of an event so striking as the escape of the Israelites, lingered for ages among the neighbouring peoples. The tribes on the east of the Red Sea, says Diodorus of Sicily, who was in Egypt shortly before the birth of Christ, "have a tradition which has been handed down among them from age to age, that the whole bay at the head of the sea was once laid bare by ebb tides, the water heaping itself on the other side, so that the bottom was seen." Artapanus, a Greek who lived some time before Christ, and wrote a book on the Jews, of which some fragments have been preserved by Eusebius, records that "the priests of Memphis were wont to say that Moses had narrowly studied the time of ebb and flow of the Red Sea, and led his people through it when the sand was bare. But the priests of Hieropolis tell this story otherwise. They say that when the king of Egypt pursued the Jews, Moses struck the waters with his rod and the waters forthwith turned back, so that the Israelites passed over dryshod. But the Egyptians having ventured on the same dangerous path, were blinded by fire from heaven, and the sea having rushed back to its bed, they all perished, partly by the thunderbolts, partly in the waters." [5]

A theory advanced by Brugsch, with respect to the

[1] The tambourine is still used universally in the East by women when they dance or sing. Niebuhr, in Rosenmüller's *Scholia*, vol. i. p. 495.

[2] Ps. lxviii. 25, 26. Ewald.

[3] 2 Sam. vi. 5. Septuagint and most recent critics.

[4] Literally. See also Ps. cl. 3–5.

[5] *Præparat.*, ix. 27, 436.

scene of the destruction of Pharaoh's host, has excited some attention. This eminent scholar, differing from all others, supposes that the Israelites, instead of turning southward towards Suez, marched to the north-east, in the direction of Pelusium.[1] Baal-zephon, he thinks, was a temple on Mount Casios, outside the Egyptian boundary wall, in the direction of Canaan, while, instead of the "Red," he rightly thinks we ought to read the "Weedy Sea;" a name given not only to the Red Sea but to the wide and terrible abysses known as the Sirbonian Lakes, between Pelusium and Goshen, near the Mediterranean coast. Between these lakes and the Mediterranean there still runs a narrow bar of coast, forming a possible line of communication between Egypt and Palestine, but covered in great storms by the foaming waters of the outside ocean. Along this pathway, he supposes, the Israelites were led in safety, while Pharaoh's army, attempting it, were met by a blinding storm, which submerged the narrow coast line, and threw them into such confusion that they lost their way, and were swallowed up in the bottomless lakes at its southern edge. We cannot adopt this hypothesis, but the great reputation of M. Brugsch claims a statement of it in his own interesting words.

"According to monumental indications," he says, "in accordance with what the classic traditions tell us of it, the Egyptian route led from Migdol to the Mediterranean, up to the wall of Gerrhon (the fortified wall of Egypt), at the extremity of the Lake of Sirbonis."

"Separated from the Mediterranean by a tongue of land which offered in ancient times the only Egyptian way into Palestine, this lake, or rather lagoon, covered with a rich vegetation of rushes and papyri, but in our day almost dried

[1] Pelusium = Mud-town (*Bib. Lex.*, art. "Sin").

up, hid the unforeseen danger which lurked in the nature of its borders, and in the presence of its fatal gulfs, of which an ancient author has left us the following description:

"'On the side of the Levant, Egypt is protected, partly by the Nile, partly by the desert, and by the swampy plains called by the name of Barathra, gulfs. There is in Cœle-Syria and in Egypt, a lake which is not very large, of a prodigious depth, and in length about 200 stadia.[1] It is called Sirbonis, and is very dangerous to the traveller approaching it unawares, for its basin being very narrow, like a ribbon, and its swampy borders very wide, it often happens that these are covered with a mass of sand, brought by the continual south winds. This sand hides from sight the sheet of water which intermingles with the soil. Through this, whole armies have been swallowed up, in ignorance of the place, and from having mistaken their way.[2] The sand slightly trodden on, leaves at first only the trace of the steps, and thus deceives those who have ventured on it, until, suspecting their danger, they seek to save themselves at the moment when there remains no means of escape. For a man thus engulfed in the mud can neither move nor extricate himself, the action of the body being hindered: neither can he get out of it; having no solid support by which to raise himself up. This intimate mixture of the water and the sand, constitutes a kind of substance on which it is impossible to walk, and through which one cannot swim. Thus, those who find themselves caught there, are dragged away to the bottom of the abyss, since the banks of sand sink with

[1] About twenty-five miles.

[2] Compare Milton, *Par. Lost*, II. 592:—

> "A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog
> Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casios old,
> Where armies whole have sunk."

them. Such is the nature of these plains, to which the name Barathra—gulfs—perfectly suits.'[1]

"The Hebrews, on approaching this tongue of land in the north-east direction, found themselves thus confronted by these gulfs: or, according to the Egyptian texts, opposite Khirst—the ancient name, which answers exactly to the gulfs in the Lake of Sea Weed—near the place Gerrhon. Thus will be perfectly understood the Biblical expression Pi-hahiroth, a word which literally designates 'the entrance to the bogs,' and agrees with the geographical situation. This indication is finally pointed out by another:—for Baal-zephon—'the Master of the North'—was, as Baal Zaponni—the Egyptian god Amon, of Thebes, the great falconer, who crossed the lagoons; the master of the northern countries, and, above all, of the marshes, to whom the inscriptions give the name of the Master of Khirst, that is to say, 'gulf' of the papyrus lagoons. To the Greeks he became Zeus Casios, and had a sanctuary at the point of the extreme Egyptian frontier on the eastern side. . . .

"After the Hebrews crossed on foot the shallows which extend between the Mediterranean and the Lake of Sirbonis, a high tide overtook the Egyptian horsemen and the captains of the chariots of war who fiercely pursued them. Baffled in their movements by the presence of their frightened horsemen, and thrown into disorder by their chariots of war, there happened to these soldiers and charioteers, that which in the course of history has sometimes occurred, not only to simple travellers, but also to whole armies. . . .

"When, in the first century of our era, the geographer Strabo, a wise man and great observer, was travel-

[1] Diodorus. i. 30.

ling in Egypt, he entered in his journal the following notice:

"'At the time of my sojourn in Alexandria, there was a high tide at the town of Pelusium, and near to Mount Casios. The waters inundated the country, so that the mountains appeared to be islands, and the road near them, leading towards Pelusium, became practicable for ships.'

"Another fact of the same nature is related by an ancient historian. Diodorus, in describing a campaign of King Artaxerxes, against Egypt, mentions a catastrophe which happened to his army at the same place:

"'When the Persian king,' says he, 'had united all his troops, he made them advance toward Egypt. Having arrived at the Great Lake, where they found places named "gulfs," he lost part of his army, because he was ignorant of the character of this region.'" [1]

This theory, which seems so plausible, has not, however, as has been said, commended itself to scholars, and has been rudely shaken by recent investigations of the locality. Instead of a connected road along the shore, it has been found that there is a long interval which is bare only at ebb tide, making it almost impossible to pass by this way to Palestine.[2] The coast line may certainly have changed in three thousand years, but, even if so, the fact that this route would have brought the Hebrews face to face with the Egyptian army at Pelusium seems conclusive that it could not be the one followed by Moses.

The Egyptian account of the escape of the Hebrews from the Nile valley is necessarily very different from that of the Bible, but its very contrast is interesting, while some details

[1] *Transactions of Orientalist Congress*, 1874, pp. 277-279.
[2] *Pal. Fund Reports*, 1880, p. 148.

seem to throw light on particulars not otherwise known. Manetho, the Egyptian historian, paraphrased, and in part quoted verbatim by Josephus, thus describes it :[1]

"Amenophis (a corrupted form of Menophthis or Menephtah) had a desire to see the gods, as Horus,[2] one of his predecessors, had done, and had told this to another Amenophis, the son of one of the priests of Apis—the Sacred Ox—who had the reputation of being inspired, from his wisdom, and because he could foretell things future. This man had said to him that he would see the gods when he had cleansed the country of all lepers[3] and other polluted persons. The king, rejoiced at this, gathered every one who had a bodily uncleanness, from every part of Egypt, to the number of 80,000, and sent the whole to the quarries on the east side of the Nile, to work in them, and be wholly separated from the other Egyptians. Among them, Manetho says, were some priests of note who were polluted by leprosy. The wise, prophetic man, Amenophis, now dreaded the wrath of the gods on himself and the king, when he saw how these men (the lepers, etc.) were treated, and in the end he predicted that certain people would come to their help, and would rule over Egypt thirteen years. Yet he did not venture to say this to the king, but he committed it to writing for him, and then killed himself. The king, at all this, was in great trouble. Then," says Josephus, "Manetho continues, 'When these people had lived miserably in the quarries for

[1] Jos., *Contra Apion*, i. 15, 26, 29. I use the version of Bunsen, founded on the best text of Josephus. *Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 134.

[2] The last king of the Eighteenth Dynasty.

[3] The leprosy was regarded by the ancients as a disease peculiar to Egypt. Pliny (xxvi. 1) calls it so, as also does Diodorus (i. 80). Lucretius says expressly, "Leprosy is a disease born in Egypt, along the waters of the Nile, and nowhere else." So that the Hebrews brought it with them from their Egyptian slavery. Quoted in Uhlemann, p. 60.

a good while, the king was asked to appoint them as a colony and guard, in the city Avaris, then lying desolate, through the departure of the Shepherds (the Hyksos). This town from the first had belonged to the god Seth or Typhon (the evil one). When, now, they had gone to this town, and had thus reached a point from which they could readily break out of the country, they made a certain priest of Heliopolis, by name Osarsiph—"the consecrated to Osiris"—their leader, and swore a solemn covenant that they would obey him. He gave them first, as a law, that they should not bow down before any of the gods, and that they should not refrain from eating the holy animals most revered in Egypt, but should kill and use them all for food, and they were further to associate with none but members of their league. After he had given them these laws, and others similarly opposed in the highest degree to Egyptian customs, he commanded them to strengthen the walls of Avaris to the utmost, and prepare for war against Amenophis, the king. Moreover, he gathered round him some of the other priests and polluted ones, and sent ambassadors to the town called Jerusalem, to the Shepherds whom Thothmes had driven out. He told them his position and that of his fellow-outcasts, and besought them to invade Egypt along with him. He promised to lead them first to Avaris, the city of their fathers, and to provide them richly with all necessities, if required, and to subdue the country to them without difficulty. They, greatly pleased, forthwith came to Avaris with 200,000 men. When, now, Amenophis, the king of Egypt, learned of the invasion of these people, he was in great fear, had the holy animals which were held in the highest honour, and kept in the temples, brought to his capital, and commanded the priests to conceal all the images

of the gods as securely as possible, and sent his son Sethos—who was five years old, and was called, also, Rameses, after Rameses, the father of Amenophis—to his friend the king of the Ethiopians. He himself crossed the west arm of the Nile with his army, which consisted of about 300,000 soldiers of the greatest prowess. Yet when he reached the enemy, he fought no battle, but taking the fancy that he was fighting against the gods, he fled and came back to Memphis. There he took the Apis and the other holy animals which he had collected round him, and marched off with them, and with his whole army, and a multitude of Egyptians, to Ethiopia, the king of which—at once his friend and tributary—received him, and provided all his train with everything the land offered for food, besides granting them sufficient cities and villages, for the thirteen years during which he believed the sovereignty of Egypt was to be taken from him. In addition, the king of Ethiopia set an army on the watch on the borders of Egypt, along with those whom King Amenophis had left behind him there. This happened in Ethiopia. But the Jerusalemites who had invaded the land, along with those polluted ones of Egyptian origin, bore themselves so cruelly that the dominion of the Shepherd Kings seemed a golden age to those who saw the present wickedness. For not only did they destroy the towns: they even burned down the temples, and mutilated the carved images, and habitually used the holy of holies of the venerated sacred animals for kitchens, and forced the priests and prophets of the holy animals to kill them (for food), after which these venerable men were themselves killed, and their bodies thrown out, naked, on the streets. It is said that the man Osarsiph of Heliopolis, who founded their state and

made their laws, when he went over to these people, changed his name and was called Moses.'

"I pass over," says Josephus, "for brevity, other particulars which the Egyptians relate of the Jews. Manetho, however, tells further, that Amenophis afterwards returned from Ethiopia with a great army, and with his son Rameses, who also led an army: that they fought with the polluted ones, overcame them, killed many, and drove the rest to the boundaries of Syria."

The confusion of events and times is evident in this strange story; but there seems to glimmer through it a proof that the Exodus was preceded by fierce religious disputes between the Hebrews and the Egyptians, and by terrible persecutions, extending even to the better classes. The reproach of leprosy, indeed, was only an ordinary expression of religious hatred, embodying the idea of religious rather than physical impurity; for all "unclean" persons were habitually denounced in this way. Leprosy has always been more or less prevalent in the Nile valley. Indeed, it was regarded by the ancients as a disease peculiar to it, but it is now known that it was common and much dreaded in Mesopotamia, from which the Jews came. The hero Gis-dubar in the Deluge tablet has to go to the spirit-land to be cured of it, as no *man* could cure it. His body, we are told, was full of leprosy, his skin consumed by it. He could only be healed by bathing in some water of the other world, and, having done so, his skin returned to health and shone like snow, so completely was he cleansed. Till then he had been banished from his city, but now he could go back to it. The purification lasted six days and seven nights. So sorely had he been stricken that his body had been covered with ulcers. It is easy from this to see that the Egyptians had good grounds,

in speaking of Western Asiatics, and among them the Hebrews, as leprous.

The first camping place of the Hebrews, after their leaving the farther side of the Red Sea, appears to have been the spot known still as Ayun Mûsa—the Springs of Moses. To reach it they would need to advance round what is now the Gulf of Suez, to a little oasis in the desert sands, some miles southwards from the present town of Suez and some distance back from the Red Sea waters. I went to it by boat, across the Gulf, and then by riding, Egyptian fashion, on a donkey, over the unspeakably barren tract between it and the shore, once itself under the waters which it now borders. Crystals of salt sparkle on the surface of the hard sand, roughened only by stone, or stray plants that can stand such a soil. Channels of winter torrents seam it into low hollows, here and there, but on all sides, one sees only varieties of forbidding waste. Ayun Mûsa has several springs, but the largest, known as that of "the Three Palms," is the richest in vegetation. As you approach, over reaches of loose sand like that of any beach, above high water, some palms, half invisible from the sandy dust on their fronds, are seen struggling through the yellow moving sand waves. The highest are poor stunted things, and between these and others, barely rising off the sand, are some of all low heights. There is sand round them, sand on them, sand everywhere. The large pond—of the Three Palms—I found to be fifty steps round. In fact, it is about the size of a horse pond and of no depth. Nor is there any strength in the spring, for the outlet is so shallow and narrow that a single stone of no great size is enough to fill up its channel. What water flows out, is led to the wretched palms at hand, but it can do little indeed for them, in such surroundings. As to gar-

dens, it is out of the question to speak of them. Among the dwarf palms, a few wretchedly poor Arabs had made a shelter of some palm fronds, in which no one in England would have housed an animal, and this was their home. The place could only be noticed at all, from the hideous sandy desert in which it is found. The whole so-called oasis is about five furlongs in circumference. There are several springs, some of them warm—that is, from seventy to eighty-four degrees Fahrenheit, but the water is, in some cases, very salt and bitter, though in others quite drinkable, and only slightly brackish. I was too disgusted with the squalor of everything round the large spring, to go to the others, but, at the best, the Hebrews must have been sorely pressed to think much of them. As to a supply for any number of people such as the Hebrews, in themselves, and their followers, things must have been very different to have yielded it.

The huge Hebrew camp broke up at last from this spot, after we know not how long a stay, and the host moved on, following its leader, to the south. On their right, across the narrow ribbon of blue sea, rose the wild peaks of the Ataka mountains, almost the last glimpse they were to have of Africa; on their left, Asia was shut out from them by the hills of El Raha; the western edge of the upland wilderness of the Tih. The track still used for caravans from Sinai, to Suez or Cairo, must have been followed; leading them wearily, at some distance from the sea, amidst the glowing heat of skies without a cloud, scorching even as early as March, over a desert hard to the feet, and strewn with sharp flints. Wadys, mostly dry, but occasionally trickling with salt-tasting water, had to be crossed, but no drinkable springs invited the vast host to refresh them-

selves and their herds. Everything was dreary and barren. Nothing living met their eye, except, perhaps, a raven, a beetle, or a lizard. High sand-hills shut out the sea on their right; the Raha hills frowned down on them on the other side of the march, and the road, whitened with the bleaching bones of camels which had fallen by the way,[2] in the past, grew more rolling and hilly as they advanced. It was the wilderness of Shur, that is, of "the great frontier wall," known also, as that of "Etham," the wall "forts."[1] For three days the vast multitude toiled along, relying on the waterskins they had brought with them; but these were at last exhausted, and the agonies of thirst began to tell on all. It was a dismal beginning of their new history, and contrasted keenly with the expectations they must have formed after their triumphal deliverance from Pharaoh. The coast of the Red Sea along which the Hebrews marched continues the same as to Ayun Mûsa—a raised beach with long intervals of hard gravel, roughened by hillocks and waves of sand, in low terraces and knolls, where the surface has, in past ages, been sawn through by torrents, or stretched out by the sea. Many torrent beds, dry except after storms, but sometimes deep and dangerous with sudden floods, during the rainy season, break the level, at times indenting the shore for the breadth of a mile. Fierce hurricanes, filling the air with sand, are not infrequent at some times of the year, and occasionally overpower both man and beast. It is to be hoped the Hebrews had neither floods nor sandstorms on their weary, burning route. At last, however, they reached Huwarah, then known as Marah, and found water, but it was too salt and bitter to drink.[2] Their moral training had already begun. Jehovah had saved them at the Red Sea,

[1] Exod. xv. 22. Num. xxxiii. 8. [2] "Marah," in Riehm, p. 953.

and would have them learn to trust Him for the future. But it was a hard lesson, and the camp once more broke out in loud murmurs against Moses. It was, indeed, an awful test of their reliance on their unseen Guide and Protector. At dawn, in these regions, it is mild and balmy as an Italian spring, and inconceivably lovely in the colours it sheds on earth, air, and sky. But presently the sun bursts up from the sea, a fierce enemy that will force every one to crouch before him. For two hours his rays are endurable, but after that they become a fiery ordeal. The morning beams oppress you with a feeling of sickness, their steady glow blinds your eyes, blisters your skin, and parches your mouth, till you have only one thought—when evening is to come. At noon the heat, reverberated by the glowing hills, is like the blast of a limekiln. The wind sleeps on the reeking shore. The sky is a dead white. Men are not so much sleeping as half senseless. They feel as if a few more degrees of heat would be death.[1] The shores of the Red Sea and the neighbouring regions, east and west, are, indeed, the hottest portion of the world, as may be judged from the thermometer sometimes rising above the heat of boiling water at Suakim. Under such circumstances the want of water is an indescribable calamity, and the excitement and confusion when some is found, or is supposed to be found, are terrible. "The crowd of thirsty men," says Buckingham, describing such a scene, "plunged at once into the stream in the darkness of the night, ignorant of its depths, which drowned some of the horses. The cries of the animals, the shouting and quarrelling of the people, and the sense of danger on every hand was awful."[2] No wonder that in the wondrous opening passage of Mendelssohn's "Elijah," genius, trying to

[1] Burton's *Meccah*, 8d ed., p. 145. [2] Buckingham's *Mesopotamia*, vol. ii. p. 8.

represent the despair of a whole people perishing from thirst—after giving it vent at first in sullen, restless murmurings, pictures it as gathering at length a terrible cumulative strength, and bursting forth almost appallingly, in cries of heart-rending and importunate agony.

Yet help was near at hand, could they but have believed in the God to whom they had vowed themselves so recently. "And Moses cried unto Jehovah: and Jehovah showed him a tree, which when he had cast into the water, the waters were made sweet," and the thirst of all relieved. A gracious promise was, besides, vouchsafed, that, if they faithfully obeyed the Divine commands and followed Jehovah loyally, they would have no such diseases sent among them as had been inflicted on the Egyptians.

Huwarah is from fifteen to seventeen hours of the slow tread of camels from Ayun Mûsa, and thus suits the position of Marah, as "three days" distant from that place. On a sand-hill on the caravan road to Sinai, surrounded by a few straggling palms and thorn bushes, there is still a shallow spring, from which Ebers, attempting to drink, was warned off by his guide with the cry, "Morra, Morra," the Arab for Marah, "bitter." Indeed, even after his adding brandy, it was found bitterly salt.[1] The Arabs and their camels only drink it when in the extremity of thirst, and even then some will not taste it.[2] The small quantity of

[1] Ebers, p. 117. This is caused by the action of sesquicarbonate of soda, with which the soil of the whole neighbourhood is impregnated.

[2] Burckhardt, in Knobel's *Exodus*, p. 160. Robinson and Seetzen, however, say their camels drank readily of it. Robinson's *Palest.*, vol. i. p. 106. Its taste seems to depend on the time of the year. Kneucker supports the opinion that the Hebrews crossed the Red Sea above Suez, at the "Bitter Sea," the water then, he thinks, reaching thither. He consequently fancies Marah much farther to the north than Huwarah. *Bibel-Lexicon*, vol. iv. p. 111. There is certainly at the place he indicates, Ain Nuba, three hours south of Suez, a very bitter spring, of much larger volume than that at Huwarah. Brugsch and Hitzig also think this was Marah,

water now found has been urged as a ground for questioning the correctness of its identification with the Marah of Exodus; but the sand may have choked up the spring in thousands of years, besides affecting the supply otherwise, and, moreover, there are traces of its much greater abundance in some years than in others. It is the first water found in any quantity after leaving Ayun Mûsa, and suits the requirements of the sacred narrative both as to distance, and from the fact that there are no other bitter springs in the neighbourhood.[1]

Travellers, with one exception hitherto, have failed to discover any tree or plant in the district which has any effect in sweetening the spring. Lesseps, however, tells us, that Arab sheiks assured him they were accustomed to put a kind of barberry which grows in the desert into such bitter water, to make it palatable;[2] and the remark of Palmer is worthy of notice, that the Bedouins use the word "tree" for everything with any medicinal properties.[3] There are, besides, in other countries, plants and trees with the very qualities ascribed by Exodus to the tree of Marah. Thus a tree which grows on the coast of Coromandel—the Nellimaram—sweetens bitter water. The missionary, Kiernander, tells us that a spring in the Mission garden, having become bitter from want of rain, was made palatable by throwing into it a branch of this tree, and this is confirmed by another missionary, Sattler. The bottoms of newly dug wells are, indeed, floored with the Nellimaram, by the Tamulese, for the very purpose of keeping the water sweet. In Peru, also,

supposing that the crossing took place at the Bitter Sea. It is indeed impossible to speak with confidence on matters of which so many details are unknown.

[1] Burckhardt and Wellsted, quoted by Knobel, p. 160. Seetzen's *Reisen*, vol. iii. p. 117.

[2] Ebers' *Durch Gosen*, p. 117.

[3] *Desert of the Exodus*, vol. i. p. 83

there is a plant called Yerva by the Spaniards, which has the power of purifying any water, however salt or bad, and making it drinkable. The people carry it with them whenever they travel any distance, to correct the unwholesomeness of the water on the road.[1]

Breaking up[2] from Marah, the next station, two hours farther on, was Elim—"the trees"—so called from "seventy palms" which marked the presence of no fewer than twelve springs. This spot, so inviting to the Hebrews, is identified by most with the Wady Gharandel, only two and a half hours south of Huwarah or Marah. It is a broad hollow running north-east to south-west, from near the hill chain of El Raha to the sea, a distance of about twelve miles. It is, after that of the Wady Feirân, farther on, the largest oasis of the Sinai Peninsula, and is still famous among the Arabs for the abundance of its waters, though their estimate in such matters is that of Orientals, rather than one from Western or Northern standards. Even so early as March, only shrunken threads of water, hardly deep enough to float a boy's paper boat, were visible; but, as he tells us, one need only have wandered in the desert for a few days to appreciate the worth and charm of even such a spot. When it has not rained for a length of time, the water does not reach the sea; but the Arabs say that it does so after wet weather. It tastes somewhat salt, but is drinkable. A few palms, mostly low and bushy, with some tamarisks and acacias, ornament the valley, and strips of grass

[1] Rosenmüller's *Morgenland*, vol. ii. p. 29.

[2] The rapidity with which a large Eastern encampment breaks up is wonderful. In quarter of the time which it would take a poor family in England to get the furniture of a single room ready for removal, the tents of a large encampment will be struck, and, together with all the movables and provisions, packed away on the backs of camels, mules, or asses, and the whole party will be on its way, leaving not a rag or a halter behind them. *Pictorial Bible*, vol. i. p. 87.

and herbage offer pasture for the camels of passing Arabs or travellers.

At different times, in fact, the wady presents very different appearances. Niebuhr says that, after rain, a powerful stream rushes through it. Burckhardt says that the spring from which the water flows is copious, but that the stream from it is only a small one, though the water is the best between it and Cairo. Robinson thinks that, though salt, it is not so disagreeable as that of Huwarah; and finally, Harper, on two occasions found a delightful small stream of good water running through the wady. There were bushes in plenty and clumps of the stunted palms of the desert. There were even pools in some parts, but they were only like those of a Scotch "burn." Forget-me-nots and maiden-hair ferns hung on the banks, and birds shewed themselves. There is, also, some pasture of the Eastern type, which is very poor, in some parts of the wady.[1] But vegetation seems to have been much more abundant in former times, for old travellers speak of it in glowing terms, dwelling on the many trees and the small copses it boasted, and especially noting the palms and numerous tamarisks; though the destruction of trees by the Arabs for ages has no doubt lessened the general richness which greeted the Hebrews. The soil and the limestone hills which bound the valley are, on the whole, however, now very bare. On the other side of the sea, dark, shattered, and verdureless, rise the boundary hills of Upper Egypt, while the Raha chain shuts in the view on the east. But, if even now, the valley be hailed by the Arabs as almost a Paradise, in comparison with the desert in which it lies, what must

[1] Harper, *The Bible and Modern Discoveries*, p. 118. Niebuhr's *Reisebesch.*, vol. i p. 227; Burckhardt's *Syria*, p. 778. Ebers' *Durch Gosen*, p. 120.

it have been 3,500 years ago to the weary and thirsty Hebrews?

ARAB ENCAMPMENT IN THE WADY SHEIK, IN SINAI.

From Elim, where they probably rested a few days, the way led through the Wady Taijibeh, a comparatively pleasant valley sprinkled with tamarisks, bushes, and palms, with

the dwarf trunks and shaggy branches peculiar to their kind in this stony region.[1] Water is found in wells, which have been sunk in past ages with great labour, but Seetzen heard of one spot with a rich spring and many date trees.[2] The road was hilly, and the view shut in on both sides; the limestone of the past changing, as the host advanced, into red and light yellow sandstone, which by its bright colour lends a striking character to the landscape. Eight hours from Gharandel they had reached the huge mountain mass of hard limestone, known perhaps ever since as "Pharaoh's Bath;" a blunted pyramid rising in layers for 1,000 feet, and broader than its height; its sides so cleft, rent, worn, and naked, that it looks like the wreck of some giant conflagration.[3] Great gaps, larger and smaller, lead far inward, and mineral springs, heated in its depths and passing through the cracks and faults of the rocks which stretch towards the coast, come to light on the shore amidst clouds of steam, as hot springs, disagreeably salt in taste, but famous among the Arabs, as a cure for all ailments. The name, Pharaoh's Bath, they say, records how Pharaoh, for his sins against the Hebrews, was thrown into the boiling caldrons in the abysses under the hill, to suffer there in the scalding depths for ever. Before reaching it, the road had crossed Wady Useit, dotted with a few wild palms and a small pool of bad water; then on, through limestone hills, to Wady Thal, where the road forks east and west up other wadys to Wady Taijibeh. The host of the Hebrews, with their herds and waggons, now passed through a succession

[1] Ritter's *Erdkunde*, vol. xiv. p. 769.

[2] Ebers says there is only a small spring of bad water. *Durch Gosen*, p. 124. Who will reconcile these contradictions? I presume the month of a traveller's visit and the drought or rain before it, account for the very opposite appearances of the same place described.

[3] Ebers' *Durch Gosen*, p. 121.

of plains shut in by naked white-yellow hills and rocky walls of sandstone, many of which in the distance seem like the work of man. Closing on all sides like an amphitheatre, they so surround the traveller, that he looks in vain for an exit; but, as he advances, the way opens of itself after a long, weary ascent. The road winds on thus from one plain to another, every short advance bringing a new view exactly similar to that just left. The shapes of the hills, indeed, vary, but as long as the sun is up the colours remain the same—yellow, gray, brown, and black; the only tints, as it appears, that nature has had to spare for this desert region. There is little verdure, and even the creatures which make these parts their dwelling, the camel, the hyena, and the antelope, have the colour of the wilderness in which they are bred, in illustration of the fact that the creatures of any region are always found coloured so as to secure them the greatest safety, or to help them most in the struggle for life in that region. Mount Taijibeh, however, varies the landscape, rising in sloping beds of different colours; gold-yellow bearing on it great bands of red, then a broad belt of black, and this is crowned, finally, by a summit of yellow. Here, on the edge of the Red Sea, amidst the sound of its waters, the tents of the Hebrews were once more pitched.[1] Why they were led thus to the shore again we can only conjecture. Was it for the springs of fresh water for the host? Or to take advantage of the landing port from Egypt for the Sinai mining region, which might secure them many commodities, of which they would hereafter stand in need? Or was it to get food for the multitude, from the magazines, and from vessels in the harbour?[2]

[1] Num. xxxiii. 10.

[2] Ebers thinks that the number of men fit for war—600,000—given as that of the Hebrews at the Exodus, must be a corruption of the text, copied from one transcriber

The road from the seashore encampment led for some distance along the coast. Leaving the high chalky cliffs of Wady Taijibeh, with their blinding glare, the Hebrews would enter on the plain of El Markha, called in Exodus the wilderness of Sin, which runs along the strand—a desolate expanse of flints, gravel, and sand, nearly destitute of vegetation, broken from time to time by equally desolate wadys opening on it from the interior. There is hardly any more dismal tract in the whole peninsula. Even in winter the heat is indescribable during the day, and it was now

to the other. In explanation of his opinion he says: "In Goshen two millions of people—the gross number which 600,000 men presupposes—not including the Egyptians who lived among them, would have made a denser population than that of the kingdom of Saxony: in other words, it would not have been an agricultural, far less a pastoral people, but a manufacturing. The whole area of Sinai," he continues, "is about 2,000 square miles (English), so that if the Israelites had ever been equally distributed over it, which is not said, and naturally could not have been the case—leaving out of the reckoning the resident tribes of Midianites, Amalekites, etc.—the population to the square mile would have been 10 per cent. denser than in the Grand Duchy of Weimar." *

"The water supply is another difficulty. Assuming that the Prussian military allowance of two Prussian quarts daily—equal to half a gallon was required for each person, a quantity rather too small than too great in such a climate, 1,000,000 gallons would be required each day, or 18,518 hogsheads. But all the cattle, which were very numerous, had, besides, to be supplied. Allowing only 10 hours a day for water-drawing, a time so short as to be wholly unequal to the requirements, a spring would have needed to yield 28 gallons a second to supply the human wants, without reckoning those of the cattle. At the present time the Bedouins of the district are in serious trouble if a caravan of even a few hundred men draw water, in passing, from even their largest springs; lest they should exhaust it for the time." The water-supply of London is at present 154,000,000 gallons a day—for, say 5,000,000 persons. On this scale, supposing the Hebrews, with the mixed multitude that went out with them, numbered in all, as many think, about 3,000,000, this would require a daily supply of about 88,000,000 gallons, supposing this quantity to maintain the cattle and flocks as well. But even if we lowered the required amount to 60,000,000 gallons a day it means no less than 267,857 tons weight of water every day. But the populousness, in ancient times, of neighbouring districts, now well-nigh as barren as Sinai, disturbs all these calculations.

* At 11,500 square miles, the area of the peninsula given by the Ordnance Survey 2,000,000 would give 174 to the square mile over the whole surface, counting the mountains as level ground. Palmer's *Sinai*, p. 4. The 2,000 square miles of Sinai must refer only to the triangle of the Sinai mountains.

approaching the middle of the year. "From about nine till eleven in the morning of a bright day," says Palmer, "when the sun's power is not yet tempered by a cooling sea breeze, travel is almost intolerable, especially to the new-comer. Heat is everywhere present, seen as well as felt. The waters of the gulf, beautiful in colour—deep azure far out from land; slowly fading, as they near the shore, to the most delicate blue, are mirror-like—almost motionless—breaking on the beach only in a sluggish, quiet ripple. The sky, also beautifully blue, is clear, hot, and without a cloud; the soil of the desert is baked and glowing. The camel-men, usually talkative and noisily quarrelsome, grow pensive and silent—their fiercest wrangles hushed in the heat of a fiercer sun. The camels grunt and sigh, yet toil along under their burdens, in a resolute plodding way which one can scarcely understand. Even the Bedouins, usually indifferent to the sun's rays, draw their thalebs, or white linen tunics, over their heads and shoulders, and tramp along under the lee of their camels; glad to avail themselves of the niggard scraps of shadow, which, though the sun is now approaching the meridian, the tall forms of these animals afford. When, at last, the sea breeze comes, one breathes a little more freely: the heat, though still great, feels less oppressive: clouds diversify the sky: the sea breaks into life and motion, and all the conditions of the march improve.

"Evening brings with it, however, the pleasantest part of the day, but the halt is followed by a scene of uproar and confusion which almost baffles description. The baggage camels, in nine cases out of ten, stoutly refuse, at first, to sit down to be unloaded, and each animal's refusal is the signal for a savage onslaught from its master, aided by every available ally he can summon to the fray. The struggle

that follows is desperate and noisy : the camels resist with a hideous series of unearthly snarling roars : the Bedouins swell the din by yells and screams, and curse everything they can think of ; especially, of course, the camel, who, perverse as he is, gives in at last." [1] If, instead of a caravan, we imagine a countless host, this vivid picture, no doubt, answers, in the main, in the unchanging East, to the scene, as the Hebrews toiled wearily on, with their wives, children, multitudinous herds, and vast aggregate of baggage.

To add to the general distress, the stores of wheat, flour, and food of various kinds, brought from Egypt, which must have been enormous to have lasted so long, began to fail, in spite of any additions which may have been procured at their last station ; for it was now six weeks since they had crossed the Red Sea. Water had failed them before, and the intolerable agonies of thirst had raised murmurs against Moses. Famine now threatened, and in the presence of this new fear, the miracles of the past were forgotten. Fierce cries rose against both Moses and Aaron, and bitter regrets were heard on all sides that they had not stayed in slavery on the Nile, where they had had "flesh pots, and bread to the full." [2] It is hard for even the best of men to trust calmly in the Providence of God when all human resources are failing, and it must have been harder still for a mixed host like that of the Hebrews, to whom their very religion was new, to do so. They had not realized that since they were under the care of Jehovah Himself, they could never want. But flesh and bread were about to be supplied from sources they little imagined, for the evening saw a great flight of quails alight amidst the encampment, and on the next morning manna covered the ground far and near.

[1] Palmer's *Explorations*, p. 20. [2] Exod. xvi. 3.

No great flocks of birds of any kind are found in the Sinai Peninsula, though one meets single birds, and among them larks and our common starling. Quails, however, not unfrequently pass over it in great migratory swarms, on their way from the interior of Africa, in the late spring, when the Hebrews encountered them, and they necessarily alight for rest. They fly, as a rule, in the evening,[1] and always before the wind,[2] keeping near the ground[3]—birds of the earth rather than of the air, as Pliny remarks.[4] Exhausted with their journey, they are easily killed with sticks, or caught in nets, or even by the hand.[5] The Egyptian monuments show such scenes, and the quails being snared by bird-catchers with nets and traps. They were eaten, in many cases, merely dried in the sun and salted, without being cooked—the monuments furnishing pictures of the process.[6] So plentiful, indeed, were these birds at times, that a colony of wretched Egyptian offenders, mutilated by having the nose cut off, and banished to the mouth of Wady el Arish, on the coast between Egypt and Palestine, are recorded to have lived on them, by setting up nets made of split reeds, along the shore, to entangle them as they came, in clouds, tired and heavy, over the sea.[7] These swarms are in fact familiar in many parts of the East. In

[1] Exod. xvi. 13.

[2] Ps. lxxviii. 26. Read "S. E. wind," for "E."

[3] Our version, in Num. xi. 31, reads as if the quails were two cubits thick on the ground, one over the other. It should be "flying about two cubits above the ground." See Knobel, *Num.*, p. 56. Also, Vulgate. The *Targum of Onkelos* rightly says, "The wind bore them upon the camp at the breadth of a day's journey here, and a day's journey there, round about the camp, and as at a height of two cubits over the face of the ground." Dean Stanley suggests that instead of quails we should read storks, from the height above the ground, but the true sense shows the fancifulness of this explanation. The stork, also, is uneatable.

[4] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, x. 33.

[5] Furrer, in *Bibel Lex.*, vol. v. p. 626.

[6] Ebers' *Durch Gosen*, p. 563. Rawlinson's *Herod.*, ii. 110.

[7] Diodorus, i. 60.

Palestine, and on the Euphrates, they are very common after the spring rains, and immense numbers of birds are caught for food and sale—their flesh being greatly prized.[1] Their flight being weak, they instinctively select the shortest sea passages in their migrations, and avail themselves of any island as a resting place. Hence, in spring and autumn, on their way from Africa, and on their return to it, they are slaughtered in great numbers in Malta and the Greek islands, where they remain, each time, only a day or two. It was natural, therefore, that the Israelites should meet them in the desert of Sin, for they would follow the land in Africa till the Red Sea was narrowed by the projecting Sinai Peninsula, and take advantage of it to cross to Asia. Indeed, vast flocks are known to visit the Sinai deserts, even now, at the time of migration. Tristram tells us that in Algeria, also, he has found the ground covered with them, over many acres, at daybreak, where, on the preceding afternoon, there had not been one. They were so fatigued, he adds, that they scarcely moved till almost trodden upon. He noticed the same phenomenon in Palestine, on a smaller scale—catching one with his hands, in the Jordan valley, while another was actually crushed by his horse's feet.[2]

The supply of manna[3] has been variously explained ; but though natural phenomena may indicate the direction in which miraculous aid was vouchsafed, they are inadequate, in their ordinary exhibition, to account for the whole facts recorded. One theory, which has met with favour from many, is that manna was simply the sugary exudation from

[1] Hammer, *Gesch. d. Osmanischen Reiches*, 2te Auf. vol. i. p. 724.

[2] Tristram, *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 231.

[3] The word manna seems to mean, primarily, "a gift" (from God), but that in no way excludes the play on it by the Hebrews, as was usual with them, by making it also mean "What is it?" which its form permits. Man-hu was also an Egyptian word for the manna of the tamarisk tree.

the twigs of the tamarisk tree, which from the earliest ages has been called "man," or "manna," by the Arabs. The twigs, not the feathery leaves, distil a sweet, syrupy, honey-like substance, which falls in heavy drops, and is gathered by the Bedouins and put into leather bags, to be used, in part as a relish with their thin flat bread; partly for sale at Cairo, and to the monks of St. Catherine's convent at Sinai.

The tamarisk is richer in sap than almost any other growth of the Peninsula, retaining its greenness when everything else is withered by the fierce summer heat. Its "manna" exudes from punctures made by an insect in the tender skin of the twigs in spring. It flows most freely after heavy rain, but needs to be cleansed and prepared before being fit for food.

"White manna" is mentioned on the Egyptian monuments as a kind of vegetable food,[1] and was used both in offerings, and in the laboratory as a medicine; so that the substance has been known from the earliest times. The Bedouins still speak of it as "raining from heaven," because it falls from the trees with the dew. Like the true manna, it also lies on the ground like hoar-frost in the earliest morning. That there was dew when it fell, in the case of the Hebrews is, by the way, a proof that their camp was not in the arid wilderness, but where water and pasture existed. The appearance of "worms" in what was gathered, if kept too long, has been explained by that of the larvæ of the fly that produces the tamarisk manna, which erelong show themselves, if it be not cleansed by passing through a coarse cloth. Like that of the Bible, this manna looks like coriander seeds; tastes like honey, and melts in the sun.[2]

To the objection that the tamarisk manna is found only

[1] *Durch Gosen*, p. 226. [2] Ritter, *Erdkunde*, vol. viii. Absch. i. pp. 680 ff.

for a month or two in spring, Ritter answers that it is not said in the Bible to have fallen every day of the year, but was only an addition to the food of the Hebrews, who had, besides, dates,[1] and flocks and herds, for milk and flesh,[2] and doubtless bought food from the Amalekites, Midianites, and Ishmaelites who lived in the district, as they wished afterwards to do with the Edomites.[3]

As to the smallness of the quantity now obtained, Ritter says, very justly, that the produce of the few trees at present existing, cannot be taken as a measure of that which a probably much greater number yielded in the days of Moses. It is certain, indeed, that Sinai, in ancient times, was much more fertile than it has since become. There are still, indeed, traces of ancient lakes, in the now arid valleys of Sinai, which have only gradually risen to their present elevation from a submergence in later geological ages of at least two hundred feet under the waters of the Red Sea, raised beaches being found with shells, corals, and crinoids of species still living in the adjoining waters. The climatic changes of Palestine from a land of abundant rain to its present comparative want of moisture must have affected the condition of a district so near it. There is no doubt, indeed, that the vegetation of the wadys has greatly decreased, in part as the inevitable effect of the winter torrents. The trunks of palm trees washed up on the shore of the Dead Sea, from which the living tree has now for many centuries disappeared, show what may have been the devastation produced among those mountains, when the floods, especially in earlier times, must have been violent to a degree unknown in Palestine; whilst the peculiar cause—the impregnation of salt—which has preserved the vestiges of the older

[1] Exod. xv. 27. [2] Exod. xii. 38; xvii. 3. [3] Deut. ii. 6.

vegetation there, has, of course, no existence here, in Sinai.[1]

"Long before the children of Israel marched through the wilderness," says the Rev. F. W. Holland,[2] "the mines were worked by the Egyptians, and the destruction of trees was probably going on. It is hardly likely that the Israelites themselves would have passed a year in an enemy's country, knowing that they were to march onwards, without adding largely to this destruction. Their need of fuel must have been great, and they would not hesitate to cut down the trees, and lay waste the gardens: and thus, before they journeyed onwards from Mount Sinai, they may have caused a complete change in the face of the surrounding district.

"It is a well-known fact that the rainfall of a country depends in a great measure upon the abundance of its trees. The destruction of the trees in Sinai has, no doubt, diminished the rainfall, which has also gradually been lessened by the advance of the desert, and decrease of cultivation on the north and north-west; whereby a large rain-making area has been gradually removed.

"In consequence, too, of the mountainous character of the Peninsula of Sinai, the destruction of the trees would have a much more serious effect than would be the case in most countries. Formerly, when the mountain-sides were terraced, when garden-walls extended across the wadys, and the roots of trees retained the moisture, and broke the force of the water, the terrible floods that now occur, and sweep everything before them, would be impossible.

"In the winter of 1867 I witnessed one of the greatest floods that has ever been known in the Peninsula. I was

[1] *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 26. [2] *Recovery of Jerusalem*, p. 513.

encamped in Wady Feirân, near the base of Jebel Serbal, when a tremendous thunder-storm burst on us. After little more than an hour's rain, the water rose so rapidly in the previously dry wady, that I had to run for my life, and with great difficulty succeeded in saving my tents and my goods; my boots, which I had not time to pick up, were washed away. In less than two hours a dry desert wady, upwards of 300 yards broad, was turned into a foaming torrent, eight to ten feet deep, roaring and tearing down, and bearing everything before it—tangled masses of tamarisks, hundreds of beautiful palm trees, scores of sheep and goats, camels and donkeys, and even men, women, and children; for a whole encampment of Arabs was washed away a few miles above me. The storm commenced at five o'clock in the evening; at half-past nine the waters were rapidly subsiding, and it was evident that the flood had spent its force. In the morning only a gently flowing stream, a few yards broad, and a few inches deep, remained. But the whole bed of the valley was changed. Here, heaps of boulders were piled up, where hollows had been the day before; there, holes had taken the place of banks covered with trees. Two miles of tamarisk wood, situated above the palm groves, had been completely washed away, and upwards of 1,000 palm trees swept down to the sea.

"The fact is that, in consequence of the barrenness of the mountains, the water, when a heavy storm of rain falls, runs down from their rocky sides just as it does, in Britain, from the roofs of our houses. There is nothing in the valleys to check it, and so it gathers force almost instantaneously, and sweeps everything before it. The monks used formerly to build walls across the gullies leading down from the mountains; they planted the wadys with fruit trees, and made

terraces for their gardens, and these checked the drainage and let it down by degrees, so that the storms in those days must have been comparatively harmless. The Amalekites and former inhabitants of the Peninsula, adopted probably the same means for increasing the fertility of their country."

Fire, also, has played its part in making Sinai the desert it, in great part, now is; for a spark from the pipe of a Bedouin may destroy all the trees of a valley. Charcoal for local mining purposes must, moreover, have been required from the earliest ages, and have caused a terrible destruction of trees. Even now, indeed, that made from the acacia may be said to be the only traffic of the Peninsula.[1] Camels loaded with it are constantly met on the way between Cairo and Suez. Hence, in the valleys from which the acacia wood was readily procured by the Hebrews, for the building of the Ark and many other sacred uses, the tree is now utterly unknown.

The greater number of trees, formerly, would, moreover, not only increase the rainfall; the fertility of the region, thus caused, would attract a denser population that can now exist in these regions, and their care and labour would increase the vegetable richness of the district. Nor are indications wanting, both in the Sinai Peninsula and in the desert regions south of Palestine, of the presence of a far larger population than the present. The Egyptian mines created extensive intercourse with the Nile; and in Edom, and the southern wilderness of the Tih, remains of cities still prove that a traffic and bustle of human life, almost inconceivable at this day, once animated these now silent landscapes.

Yet, with every allowance for greater fertility over the

[1] *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 27.

Peninsula and the desert north of it in the time of Moses, we fear that the explanation of the supply of manna as having come from the tamarisk tree is wholly inadequate.

Another idea has, however, been advanced—that of its having been derived from the manna rains known in various countries. There is an edible lichen which sometimes falls in showers several inches deep, the wind having blown it from the spots where it grew, and carried it onwards. In 1824 and in 1828, it fell in Persia and Asiatic Turkey in great quantities. In 1829, during the war between Persia and Russia, there was a great famine at Oroomiah, south-west of the Caspian Sea. One day, during a violent wind, the surface of the country was covered with what the people called "bread from heaven," which fell in thick showers. Sheep fed on it greedily, and the people, who had never seen it before, induced by this, gathered it, and having reduced it to flour, made bread of it, which they found palatable and nourishing. In some places it lay on the ground five or six inches deep. In the spring of 1841, an amazing quantity of this substance fell in the same region, covering the ground, here and there, to the depth of from three to four inches. Many of the particles were as large as hail-stones. It was gray, and sweet to the taste, and made excellent bread. In 1846, a great manna rain, which occurred at Jenischehr, during a famine, attracted great notice. It lasted several days, and pieces as large as a hazel-nut fell in quantities. When ground and baked it made as good bread, in the opinion of the people, as that from grain. In 1846, another rain of manna occurred in the government of Wilna, and formed a layer upon the ground, three or four inches deep. It was of a grayish white colour, rather hard, irregular in form, without smell, and insipid. Pallas, the

Russian naturalist, observed it on the arid mountains and limestone tracts of the Great Desert of Tartary. In 1828, Parrott brought some from Mount Ararat, and it proved to be a lichen known as *Parmelia Esculenta*, which grows on chalky and stony soil, like that of the Kirghese Steppes of Central Asia. Eversmann described several kinds of it, last century, as found east of the Caspian, and widely spread over Persia and Middle Asia. It is round, and at times as large as a walnut, varying from that to the size of a pin's head, and does not fix itself in the soil in which it grows, but lies free and loose, drinking in nourishment from the surface, and easily carried off by the wind, which sweeps it away in vast quantities in the storms of spring, and thus causes the "manna rains" in the districts over which the wind travels.[1]

It has been acutely remarked[2] that the description of manna in Exodus seems to imply that there were two kinds of it, since the same substance could not "be ground in mills or beaten in mortars" and yet "melt in the sun." There would then be room for supposing that both the tree and the lichen manna may have played a part in the supply of the Hebrews; but, in any case, there were special features which imply miraculous agency. The quantity of manna now gathered in the Peninsula in the best season is not more than 600 or 700 pounds weight a year, and generally not more than a third of this quantity, so that no probable estimate of the greater fertility of the district in ancient times could suppose the production equal to the wants of the vast host of Israel. That which they enjoyed was nutri-

[1] Ritter, *Erdkunde*, vol. viii. Absch. i. pp. 680 ff. Macmillan's *Footnotes from the Page of Nature*, p. 104.

[2] Kalisch, *Exodus*, p. 214. Robinson's *Palestine*, vol. i. p. 170. Laborde's *Exodus and Numbers*, p. 97.

tious and satisfying, whereas the tree manna is rather a condiment than a food, and was rightly classed by the Ancient Egyptians, for its effects on the body, as a drug, and kept, as such, in the medical storerooms found in all temples. That a double quantity fell on the sixth day, and none on the seventh, points,[1] moreover, to direct providential arrangements, and it certainly looks as if the tree manna, which has always been well known, could not have been so great a wonder to the Hebrews, as to have required a sample to be preserved to future generations.

The explanations of earlier writers have, at times, been very curious. Manna was supposed, for instance, to have been the dust of trees blown off by the air, or sweet vapours rising from them, and falling, when condensed by the dew, in a thick honey-like substance. Air manna was the name given to this fanciful creation.[2] "The intense heat in Arabia," says Oedman, "draws a number of sweet juices from the trees and shrubs growing there, and the odours of these rise in the air and float so long as they are lighter than the atmosphere, but thicken as the evening cools, and fall with the dew in a sticky, honey-like form." This theory is supported by authorities which are at least curious, however scientifically incorrect. Avicenna,[3] in his great book on medicine, describes manna as "a dew which falls on stones or plants, has a sweet taste, is of the thickness of honey, and hardens into a grain-like form." In another place he speaks of a kind of manna which is the vapour of trees and plants,

[1] The words "abide ye every man in his place on the seventh day," were held by one Jewish sect as a command that no one should move at all during the whole Sabbath from the spot and position in which its commencement found him. Routh, *On Hegesippus, R. S.*, vol. i. p. 225.

[2] See a long list of authorities in Rosenmüller's *Das Alte u. Neue Morgenland*, vol. ii. p. 34.

[3] Born near Bokhara, A.D. 978. Died at Ecbatana, in Persia, A.D. 1036.

undergoing a certain preparation in the air and falling like honey, at night, on trees and stones. In the same way Aristotle says, "Honey falls from the air, especially at the ascent of the larger stars, and when the rainbow is seen, but not before the rising of the Pleiades." Pliny, agreeing with this, writes, "From the rising of the Pleiades honey falls from the air, about daybreak. At that time the leaves of the trees are found bedewed with honey, and any one early afoot has his clothes as it were anointed, and his hair ropy." Shaw, in strange keeping with these fancies, tells us that when travelling in Palestine, his bridle and saddle were one night covered with sticky dew. The monks at Sinai also speak of manna falling on the roof of their cloister, but this may be the manna of the tamarisk, carried by the air.

A number of trees, in fact, yield more or less of a sweet substance known as manna. Two kinds of ash in Sicily and Italy produce it; the camel's-thorn of India, Egypt, Arabia, Northern Persia, and Syria, is equally famous over these widely separate regions; the plant called gharb, which grows in the valley of the Jordan, yields what is called the Beiruk honey; and several kinds of oak, in different countries, have also a saccharine exudation, due to the punctures of the leaves by insects. All these sorts, which, however, are rather a form of sugar than any more substantial food, are gathered for use; but they throw little light, after all, on the manna of the Hebrews. The edible lichen seems in all respects most similar to the famous "heavenly bread" of Sinai and the wilderness,[1] but there is no record of its hav-

[1] Furrer thinks the tamarisk manna that of Exodus. *Bibel Lex.*, vol. iv. p 109. So also does the author of the art. "Manna," in Riehm's *Handwörterbuch*. Ebers' *Durch Gosen*, pp. 223-247. Winer, *Realwörterbuch*, art. "Manna." Ritter, *Erdkunde*, vol. xiv. pp. 665 ff. Mühlau and Volck, Gesenius' *Lex.*, 8te Auf. p. 478. Knobel, *Exodus*, p. 173. Captain Palmer thinks the quantity too small to have ever

ing been observed in the Peninsula of Sinai. Dean Stanley forcibly sums up the improbability of the tamarisk manna being that of Exodus: "An exudation like honey, produced by insects; used only for medicinal purposes; falling on the ground only from accident or neglect, and at present produced in sufficient quantities only to support one man for six months, has obviously but few points of similarity with the 'small round thing, small as the hoar-frost on the ground; like coriander seed, white; its taste like wafers made with honey; gathered and ground in mills, and beat in a mortar, baked in pans and made into cakes, and its taste as the taste of fresh oil.'" In his opinion the manna of Kurdistan and Persia—the edible lichen, "far more nearly corresponds to the Mosaic account."[1] Vaihinger thinks that the tamarisk manna, even if miraculously increased, would not satisfy the requirements of the sacred narrative. His closing remarks deserve quotation on various grounds. "All recent travellers," says he, "inform us that the whole peninsula has not at this time over 6,000 inhabitants, and maintain that its barren soil could not support many more. But as in the time of the Exodus there were Midianites in the south of it, and Amalekites in no small number lived in its northern parts, it seems hardly conceivable how a nation of 2,000,000 persons could find room in addition, and secure food. Yet this estimate of the Israelites is confirmed by two different reckonings.[2] An increase of fertility to the extent of five hundred-fold must therefore be assumed during forty years, to explain the support of the Israelites; and, moreover, the tamarisk manna cannot be made into bread.

been of any moment, while, besides, it is only found in May and June. *Recent Explorations*, p. 24.

[1] *Sinai and Palestine*, vol. i. p. 28. [2] Exod. xii. 37. Num. i. 46; ii. 32; xxvi. 51.

"If, besides, the number of Israelites at the Exodus is right, and we have no reason for doubting it: if the forty years' wandering in the wilderness be a historical fact: nothing remains but to regard the manna as a miraculous gift for the support of the Chosen People." [1]

[1] Vaihinger, in Herzog, vol. viii. p. 795.

CHAPTER VIII.

STILL ON THE WAY TO SINAI.

Travelling is at best very slow among Orientals, a short distance of ten miles being regarded as a special effort by an Arab encampment, while the ordinary progress made is no more than six. A vast multitude like the Hebrews would be even slower in its movement than the population of a few tents, and hence it would require a long time before the host reached the tangled and difficult passes of the Sinai Mountains. The course was necessarily determined by the facility for obtaining water, and it is thus more or less easy to conjecture; the springs and wells of the possible routes being known to us. To lead them must have been a most formidable task, for the breaking up of a vast encampment, the moving and the pitching of the tents, the securing cattle, baggage, the feeding and watering them, and a thousand things besides, in the evening would create a world of confusion and uproar in an excitable multitude of so immense a size. What each morning on which they woke up brought with it, may be in some degree realized by Burton's description of the daily scene at the starting on its successive marches, of the great pilgrimage to Mecca.

"At half-past ten that evening," says he, "we heard the signal for departure; and, as the moon was still young, we prepared for a hard night's work over rough ground covered with thicket. Darkness fell upon us like a pall; the camels

tripped and stumbled, tossing their litters like cock-boats in a short sea. It was a strange, wild scene ; the black basaltic field was dotted with the huge and doubtful forms of spongy-footed camels, with silent tread looming like phantoms in the midnight air, the hot wind moaned, and whirled from the torches sheets of flame and fiery smoke, whilst ever and anon a swift-travelling native carriage, drawn by mules and surrounded by runners, bearing gigantic blazing cressets, threw a passing glow of red light upon the dark road and the dusky multitude."

At last, however, the Hebrews had reached the more difficult portion of their journey. Leaving the barren sweep of the Desert of Sin, which stretches along the seashore to the very south of the Peninsula, the mountain system of Sinai was close before the Hebrews in all its grandeur. Huge precipices and peaks of every form, in bands and masses of gray, red, brown, green, chalk-white, and raven-black, rose on every side. It seemed as if "legions of evil spirits had united their strength and hostility to life, in piling up the hard, naked, desolate, barren cliffs, pinnacles, peaks, and perpendicular walls; to be alone amidst which would be to despair." Yet the spirit of gain had led men even here, for ages before Moses. It was the beginning of the mining district of the Ancient Egyptians. The route lay through Wady Maghara, past Wady Sidr, to Wady Mokatteb. Mighty walls of rock on both sides appeared to block up the way with masses hewn by Titans and heaped up one on the other. Red and black stones, broken as small as if by the hand of man, lay in great heaps, or strewed the path, which led imperceptibly upwards, through passes disclosing fresh landscapes, at the sight of which the pulses throbbed and a shudder ran through the frame. Countless

pinnacles and peaks, cliffs and precipices, of every colour—white and gray, sulphurous yellow, blood-red and ominous black, rose anew in wild confusion and to vast heights.[1] Wady Maghara, a wide valley, closed in by two high and rocky mountains—the Ta Mafka of the Egyptians and the Dophkah [2] of the Hebrews, now opened before the host: its steep and lofty southern cliffs of dark granite; its northern, of red sandstone varied by a light brown. Here, for well-nigh a thousand years before the days of Moses, the Egyptians had worked their treasured mines of copper and turquoise, a stone to which, even now, the Arabs ascribe the power, when worn, of warding off misfortune, strengthening the eyesight, gaining the favour of princes, securing victory over enemies, and driving away bad dreams.[3] In the midst of the valley rose a hill, surrounded by a wall, and crowned with small stone houses for the guard, the officers and the overseers; their only roofs a slight covering of palm branches brought from the Oasis of the Amalekites, which was near.[4] On the highest peak of the hill, where it was most exposed to the wind, were the smelting furnaces, and a manufactory where a peculiar green glass was prepared, in imitation of emerald; that stone itself being found only more to the south, on the western shore of the Red Sea.

Inscriptions and rude sculptures, which still remain, show the extreme antiquity of these mines; the very oldest of which we have any record; dating further back than four thousand years before Christ. One group shews three figures bearing the royal crown; the third holding fast, with his left hand, an enemy wearing a feather head-dress, who kneels at his feet—the representative of the

[1] Ebers' *Uarda*, vol. ii. p. 160.
[2] Num. xxxiii. 12.
[3] *Durch Gosen*, p. 137.
[4] *Uarda*, vol. ii. p. 162.

whole local population; the right hand being raised to strike the suppliant a deadly blow with an uplifted war-club. The Pharaoh thus portrayed, is Senefru, the last king of the ancient Third Dynasty; beside him is Cheops, the builder of the Great Pyramid. The inscriptions range from the reign of Senefru, four thousand years before Christ, to that of Thothmes III., sixteen hundred years before the birth of our Saviour, and even to that of Rameses II., the Oppressor.

After leaving Egypt the Hebrews had advanced leisurely, with abundant time for stragglers to regain the main body at each change of the encampment. They had rested and refreshed themselves at well-chosen spots, where the cattle could be watered, fed, and cared for, and the flesh of slaughtered animals divided and cooked. How long the stay at each halting place had been is not told, but it must always have been more than one day, as it would have been impossible for the whole multitude to break up, and encamp afresh, daily. But, in spite of all the care of Moses, the region through which he was leading his people sadly dispirited them. The terrible Wilderness of Sin had been succeeded by landscapes of such almost unequalled desolation and wildness that even the Romans, in after ages, were appalled by their savage horrors, as of huge Alps, bared to their stony skeletons, with no display of verdure on their gloomy sides. Through such scenes the host had advanced; surrounded and pressed together by narrow defiles; the hanging rocks overhead apparently ready to topple down on them; stumbling over loose stones and wearily climbing up rocky paths, offering no green blade towards which the thirsty tongue of the cattle might stretch out; the herds of camels and cattle, and the flocks of sheep, blocking up the

narrow gorges, and hindering the march of the men, women, and children. The road they had thus passed had been terrible, but that which now opened before them must have looked like the valley of death. They would have been more than human if they had been able to endure, without a murmur, experiences so different from those which they had fancied liberty would bring them.

Why should Moses have led them so terrible a road? The question can be answered only when we know whom, and what, the great leader expected to find at Dophkah.

Inscriptions still remaining show that the mines in this gloomy region were in full operation during the reign of Rameses II., the Oppressor, but none have been found of that of his successor, the Pharaoh of the Exodus; a fact which, together with the evident richness of the abandoned workings, seems to point to some external cause having led to their sudden stoppage.

Copper was very early known not only in Western Asia and Egypt, but also in Palestine.[1] Homer speaks of Sidon as "rich in copper," and the metal is mentioned no less than forty times in the Pentateuch, while iron is mentioned only twice, if we except the notices in Deuteronomy. In the book of Job we are told,

> "There is a vein for the silver,
> And a place for gold, which they refine;
> Iron is taken out of the earth,
> And they melt stone into copper.
> Man sinketh a shaft far from a sojourner;[2]
> There the forgotten live, away from the feet of passers by;
> Away from man, they hover[3] on the rocks."

[1] Möver's *Phönizier*, vol. ii. p. 66. [2] Far from human dwellings.
[3] Job xxviii. 2-4. An obscure passage. The rendering given is combined from Delitzsch, Dillmann, and Merx.

In the City of the Dead at Memphis, many bronze and copper articles are found, which, like the mines of the Wady Maghara, date as far back as the time of the pyramids; and, indeed, the wondrously fine hewing of the blocks of stone by the builders of these structures; the delicate sculptures, in relief, in the tombs of Gizeh; and, especially, the almost matchless statues of Cephrenes, the builder of the Second Pyramid, cut out of the hardest breccia, would have been impossible without metal tools.[1]

The condition of the miners in the torrid and desolate Egyptian workings at Sinai was sad in the extreme; for "to work in the mines" had as ominous a meaning to the population of the Nile, as it now has in Russia, when spoken of the mines of Siberia. Many notices on the monuments cast a dismal light on the horrors of those condemned to this fate, but a still more vivid picture of them has been left us by an old Greek writer, who describes, from personal knowledge, the misery of the labourers in the gold mines which lay on the boundaries of Egypt and Nubia, between the Nile and the Red Sea.[2]

"The kings of Egypt," says he, "send to the gold mines condemned criminals, prisoners of war, and persons convicted on false accusation, or banished in the heat of passion. By this means they procure the labour necessary to obtain the great treasures these mines yield; the punishment being often extended not only to the offender, but to all related to him. The number of the convicts is very great, and they are all chained by foot irons, and have to

[1] Ebers thinks these must have been of copper, which he assumes to have preceded iron, as childhood does manhood. But Dr. Dahn, on the other hand, proves that iron is often found earlier, not only than copper, but even than bronze. *Urgeschichte der Germanischen Völker*, 1881, vol. i. p. 4.

[2] Agatharcides (about B.C. 150), quoted by Diodorus Siculus, iii. xi. xii. xiii.

work continually, without an interval for rest. Not only is there no break of work for them by day : the very night brings them none, and, withal, every chance of escape is cut off from them ; for foreign soldiers, whose language they do not understand, are set over them, so that no one can move his guard by friendly words or entreaties. Where the gold-bearing soil is hardest, huge fires are kindled to loosen the ground, before the miners begin to dig ; but as soon as the rock is burnt enough to require less violent labour, many thousands of the unfortunates are set to break it up with quarry tools. The oversight of the whole work is under the charge of a skilled officer, who knows the difference between rich and poor stone, and directs the toilers accordingly. The strongest drive shafts into the rocks ; not in a straight line, but as the glittering metal may lead, and these shafts wind and turn so that the hewers have to work with a lamp on their forehead, else they would be in total darkness. They have, moreover, constantly to change their position as the rock demands, till finally they get the pieces broken off and thrown down on the floor of the galleries. Meanwhile, the overseers keep them up to this heavy task by roughness and blows.

"The boys who have not yet come to their strength, have to go into the shafts in the rocks, and painfully raise and drag out to the open day, the pieces of stones broken off by the miners. From these lads, men, who must be over thirty years of age, receive each a fixed quantity of this quarried metal, and have to pound it in stone troughs, with iron pestles, till it is no larger than a pea.

"The wives and the old men then take these fragments and pour them into mills, of which a number stand in a row, and these are driven by two or three persons, by a

winch, till the whole is ground as fine as flour. One cannot look at these wretched creatures, who not only are unable to keep themselves clean, but are too ragged even to hide their nakedness, without lamenting their fate. For there is no care or pity for the sick, the injured, the gray-headed, or for the weakness of woman. All, driven by blows, must work on till death comes to end their sufferings and their sorrows. In the bitterness of their agony, the condemned anticipate the future as even more horrible than the present, and wait eagerly for death, which is more fondly desired than life. The discovery of these mines dates from the earliest times: they must have been begun, already, under the old kings."

To this dismal narrative may be added the testimony of hieroglyphic inscriptions, still extant at the ancient mines of Sarâbit-el Khâdim, another spot in the Sinai Mountains, where similar scenes were to be witnessed in these old, wicked times. One of the principal tablets refers to a certain Hur-ur-ra, superintendent of the mines, who arrived there in the month Phamenoth, in the reign of some monarch not mentioned, probably of the Twelfth Dynasty. The author of the inscription declares that he never left the mine; he exhorts the chiefs to go there also, and "if your faces fail," says he, "the goddess Athor will give you her arms to aid you in the work. Behold me, how I tarried there after I had left Egypt—my face sweated, my blood grew hot. I ordered the workmen daily, and said unto them, 'There is still turquoise in the mine, and the vein will be found in time.' And it was so; the vein was found at last, and the mine yielded well. When I came to this land, aided by the king's genii, I began to labour strenuously. The troops came and entirely occupied it, so that none

escaped therefrom. My face grew not frightened at the work, I toiled cheerfully; I brought abundance, yea, abundance of turquoise, and obtained yet more search. I did not miss a single vein."

Another inscription runs: "I came to the mines of my lord. I commenced working at Mafka, for turquoise, at the rate of fifteen men daily. Never was like done in the reign of Senefru, the justified."

The explorations of Major Palmer have, in recent years, helped vividly to illustrate some details of this sad narrative. In the little Wady Umm Themâim, he discovered the mouth of a mine a short way up the face of the hill, and on entering found himself in a labyrinth of narrow winding galleries, leading about 400 feet into the rock. Most of these were so low that he had to creep on his hands through them, and a safe return was only secured by the precaution of unwinding a cord as he advanced, to mark his proper course in getting out again. The air was oppressive in the extreme, for there was no ventilation; the fresh outer atmosphere finding no entrance to the depths of the mountain; bats, moreover, flew out in great numbers, entangling themselves in his hair and beard. The walls of the galleries were still black with the smoke of the lamps used, ages before, by the miners, and a wooden prop was found which had supported the roof of some side gallery "perhaps before the building of the First Pyramid:" for so old were the workings that even the hieroglyphics at their mouth were well-nigh worn away by time.[1]

It will be noticed that not only persons obnoxious to the Pharaoh, but their whole families and connections; children, men, wives, and old people, were banished to the

[1] Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*, pp. 196 ff.

mines; and it may readily be conjectured that this convict population was recruited, in the time of Rameses II. and his successor, from the troublesome elements in the Delta. Indeed, great numbers of Hebrews of all classes, with their families, must have been thus put out of the way; and among those thus banished to worse than death, it may well be that friends and relatives of Moses himself, condemned after his flight to Midian, might be found.

The mines were, in fact, even in the times of the Roman emperors, the equivalent of our penal settlements, or rather of the French Bagnios; since the condemned worked in chains. In the famous porphyry quarries between the Nile and the Red Sea, the miners were exclusively persons sentenced to this fate, and included not a few noble elements, such as the multitude of Christian confessors banished by Diocletian to these wretched places.

In the same way, as before noticed, Manetho's account of the Exodus informs us, that Amenophis (Menephtah) ordered all the lepers and other unclean persons to be brought together from all Egypt—80,000 in number—and sent to the stone-quarries east of the Nile, to work there, apart from the Egyptian convicts. There were, we are told, some learned men among these unfortunates—priests infected with "leprosy." It is to be remembered, moreover, that Manetho names a priest of On—Osarsiph or Moses—as chosen by these "unclean" as their leader. The quarries, however, were probably not the only place to which these outcasts were sent, or perhaps not even the real one, but that the mines of Sinai had their share. Indeed, the mention of the quarries on the Nile seems only a later invention, in keeping with the wild confusion of places and dates which marks the story.

That these so-called lepers were no other than the Hebrews, admits of little doubt. Those who were obnoxious to the Egyptians, either from neglecting the sanitary laws so strictly enforced on the Nile, or from opposing the religion of the country, were habitually branded as leprous. It is, moreover, beyond question, as already stated, that leprosy actually afflicted the Hebrews when they left Egypt.

We may fairly conclude, therefore, from what we know of the policy of the Pharaohs in deporting all who incurred their suspicion or displeasure, to the mines of Sinai, with their families and connections, that Moses would find there great numbers of his people, whom he could free from their terrible sufferings, and carry off with him into liberty.

The route by the mines would be the more practicable since, even in the absence of springs, there was doubtless a supply of water for the miners, in huge tanks excavated in the rock. In a curious Ancient Egyptian plan of the gold mines, now preserved at Turin, such a reservoir occurs, and an inscription found at Kukan, on the Nile, informs us that Rameses II. took care to provide one on the road to them. He had heard that much gold was to be had in the district, but that the drivers and their asses perished from thirst on the way. The head men of the part were therefore summoned, and being asked how this could be prevented, returned an answer which, curiously enough, ascribes to him, in high oriental flattery, the power of working the very miracle which Moses wrought with his rod: "Thou commandest the water —'Flow over the rocks'— and an ocean hurries forth in obedience to thy word." Nor is this the only case in which similar care for the provision of water, in like circumstances, is mentioned. In the very region of the Sinai mines, in Wady Maghara, there is a

tablet cut on the rocks, which shows the Pharaoh Rathoures, of the Fifth Dynasty, with a great vessel at his side, from which water is streaming out; the word "Life" being thrice repeated, and an inscription, written above, "The Lord of the Mountains. He brings here the gift of water." The figure of the Pharaoh himself is accompanied by words which illustrate the awe in which the monarchy of Egypt was held by its subjects! Thrice over he is styled "*The great god*, the lord of both lands, the king of Upper and Lower Egypt."

This tablet was cut in memory of a victorious military expedition of a division of the army of Rathoures against "the Bedouin tribes of Sinai," and also as a grateful recognition of his care for the supply of water for the miners and the Egyptian force that watched them. Traces of the reservoirs he provided are, indeed, still to be seen at the garrison post.

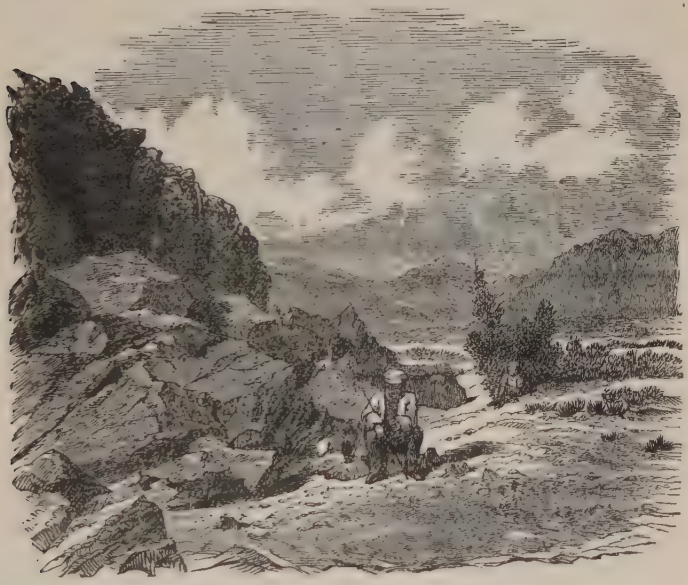
The expectation of freeing a large number of his countrymen from a dismal fate, and at the same time, the knowledge that he would find water for his host in the huge cisterns on the route, the shortest to Sinai—perhaps, also, the belief that he would secure supplies of various kinds in the magazines provided for the wants of the miners and of the garrison, may well have induced Moses to pass through Dophkah. The small Egyptian force, which a tablet of the Twelfth Dynasty[1] informs us was at that time only 738 men strong, could give no effective resistance, and in all probability withdrew before the vast host of the Hebrews, to join the neighbouring hostile Arab tribes, and offer, in their company, at a later time, a front to the invaders.

From Dophkah the road to Sinai lay in a direct line

[1] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, vol. ii. p. 137.

through Wady Mokatteb and Wady Feirân; the former famed, through many centuries past, for the inscriptions from which it has received its name.[1]

The wady, at first broad, gradually narrows into a ravine, on the west side of which, almost exclusively, these inscriptions are found. None of them, whether in Sinaitic (Na-



ENTRANCE TO THE WADY MOKATTEB.
Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus.*

bathæan), Greek, Coptic, or Arabic, are cut into the rock to any depth, or with any care. Even the best are only scratched on the surface, some so lightly that it seems as if a nail, a knife, or a flint, had been used rather than a chisel. Beside, many are outlines of animals and other objects, but

[1] Mokatteb="The written."

the artistic skill of these is on a par with the rude designs on the house-doors of the Fellahs, or those of children in their first attempts at drawing; indeed, they are such as only infantile minds could condescend to execute. Armed and unarmed men; laden and unladen camels; horses, with and without riders and leaders; long-horned antelopes; stars and crosses, have been in special favour with the creators of this strange gallery; but there are also ships, fish, and such elementary hunting scenes as a dog chasing an antelope.

These inscriptions date, apparently, from a few centuries before and after Christ; some of them the work, it may be, of heathen; others, without doubt, of Christians of the earliest centuries of our era. Already, in the sixth century, Cosmas Indicopleustes[1] speaks of them as memorials of the passage of the Jews from Egypt, and thinks the characters in which they are written a proof, in Hebrew, of the truth of the Bible narrative. Similar inscriptions are found more or less frequently over the whole of Arabia Petræa, as far as Egypt on the west, and the Hauran on the north-east. But they are most abundant in the Sinai Peninsula, where their similarity in the most widely separated wadys, even those most off the ordinary lines of travel, seems to show they were the work of the resident tribes. The exact resemblance of the written characters employed, to those on the coins[2] of the Nabathæan princes, who resided in the rock-city of Petra, between the Dead Sea and the branch of the Red Sea which bounds the Sinai Peninsula on the east, has also been noticed as a proof of their local origin.

That they were, however, in all cases the work of people who, though local, were yet unsettled, is shown in various ways. They are found in the greatest numbers precisely

[1] About A.D. 535. [2] The earliest of these coins date from B.C. 151 to 146.

View in the Wady Mokatteb.

where persons on a journey could find shade: they are always so low that they can be reached without difficulty from the ground, and they have been thrown off so carelessly that the rock has hardly in any case been smoothed to prepare for them. Had the writers lived on the spot, they would have spent more time on the stony memorials by which they sought to immortalize themselves, and would not have been satisfied with scratches that would long ago have been illegible, but for the dryness of the air and the heat, which have not only preserved the stone wonderfully, but, in many places, covered it, as it were, with a glassy coating. Men do not care, moreover, to perpetuate their names where they habitually live, but rather at spots which they only visit for a time.

Already, in the fourteenth century before Christ, the great Rameses chiselled his name and his likeness on the mountain walls of the lands he had conquered. Mercenaries of Psammetichus I.,[1] who had journeyed to the second cataract, carved their names on the leg of one of the colossi which keep guard over the temple of Abu-Simbel; on the great Sphinx of Gizeh; on the walls of the famous tombs near Thebes, and on many other similar places; just as in the Written Wady of Sinai, hundreds of Greek and Roman travellers have inscribed mementoes of themselves, in prose and verse, often along with their names. It was, thus, the whim of antiquity, as much as of to-day, to leave some record of one's self in passing noted scenes.

The fact that nearly all the Sinai inscriptions refer to a wandering life, strengthens the grounds for referring them to a similar origin. Outlines of laden camels, ships, men with staves in their hands, and gazelles, the symbol of the

[1] B.C. 664–610.

desert, occur most frequently. Other representations point to special circumstances which caused many to make this valley the limit of their journey. It is also noticeable that the inscriptions follow certain directions. The chief stream flows, as it were, towards Mount Serbal; another, much feebler, towards Mount Sinai; a third, towards the rock-city Petra, and a fourth is found in the Hauran. But the Wady Mokatteb must have had especial attractions, for its sides show an unwonted number of inscriptions.

The first step towards the understanding of these strange records was made by Professor Beer, of Leipsic, in the year 1840, by the discovery of the value of some of the signs. But Beer died soon after this feat, leaving it to be followed to noteworthy results by others. In 1849, Professor Tuch, also of Leipsic, following the hints thus given, was able to show that the authors of the inscriptions were mostly heathen Arabs, who had perpetuated their names when on a pilgrimage to the holy places of their Sabæan worship—Sinai, Serbal, and the Wady Feirân. The ancient Arabs worshipped the sun and moon, and also the brightest of the stars, preferring the tops of the highest mountains for sanctuaries, as nearest to their god Baal—the sun. Their primitive temples were only some stones of special shape, laid rudely on each other, but they also liked to pray under the shade of broad-spreading trees, which seemed an emblem of the Moon-goddess, who sent fruitfulness and prosperity. To such a religion the authors of the inscriptions belonged, for many of them describe themselves as "Servants," "Fearers," or "Priests" of the Sun-god, Baal, and of the Moon. Among all the names, moreover, numerous though they be, not one, according to Tuch, is Christian or Biblical. But in this he differs from other scholars.

The Christian crosses and signs which accompany many inscriptions, seem either to be more recent additions, or the work of the latest pilgrim visitors, who had embraced Christianity, but still retained the use of the Nabathæan writing.

Tuch thinks that the inscriptions date from the centuries immediately preceding the spread of Christianity over the Sinai Peninsula, and that the language in which they are written is an Arabic dialect, with some Aramaic words. Levy, a professor at Breslau, on the other hand, contends that they are written in Aramaic, but show signs of Arabic influence; but, after all, Aramaic and Arabic may be called dialects of a common speech. He thinks most of them date from the century before Christ, and that the latest must be as old as the fourth century of our era. "The idea in the mind of the writers," says he, "may have been that such inscriptions would keep them always, as it were, before the gods, and secure their permanent favour. To make this the surer, they often added rude pictures of themselves, perhaps with some detail of their personal surroundings: and thus, it may be, we have at the side of an inscription, the outlines, sometimes of the individual alone; at others, with the accompaniment of a camel or horse, as if to make him be remembered more easily."

Palmer's hypothesis seems to have much to recommend it as an explanation of the numbers of inscriptions found in Wady Mokatteb. He thinks that a great Arab fair must have been held periodically there. To this Ebers adds the idea that it may have been the scene, from time to time, of a great religious or national feast, like those which still take place among the local Arabs. Palmer describes such a great national feast of the Bedouins, at which games, races of camels, and rejoicings of all kinds took place. In old times,

such a gathering, held in this wady, would bring together the population from all parts; uniting as it would, like similar occasions now, the attractions of a large fair or market, to those of popular amusements and spectacles, and religious observances.

The inscriptions in Greek are of as little value as the Nabathæan. According to Ebers, some show heathen, some Christian names. Beside that of a Deacon Job, a soldier, who evidently had a poor opinion of Christians, has written, "A poor set of trash these. I, the soldier, have written this all with my own hand."[1]

Alush, the next camping place of the Hebrews,[2] may have been near a spring which bubbles up not far from the entrance to Wady Feirân, where the mountains and the ground show a strange variety of colours; red predominating so greatly that many of the ridges and lower elevations look at a distance like fallen brick walls.

Wady Feirân itself, with its background of distant peaks, is, in many parts, like the valleys of the Alps, where the pinnacles rise barest and most abruptly to the heavens, seeming to forbid approach. Inviting, above other valleys of Sinai, as it advances, its entrance is destitute of any other vegetation than the poor growth of the wilderness, and the dark green leaves of the Coloquintida, with its bright golden orange-like fruit. But the outward similarity is all, for it is at once very bitter and in some degree poisonous, though used by the Arabs, in small quantities, as a drug.

A sketch by Ebers of this part of his route brings the landscape and its people vividly before us. "On the follow-

[1] *Durch Gosen*, pp. 165–179.

[2] Num. xxxiii. 13. Alush, in the *Targumists*, means "a crowd of men." Knobel (*Exodus*, p. 162), followed by the *Speaker's Commentary*, thinks the Hebrews avoided Wady Feirân, but Ebers leads them through it.

ing morning," says he, "we broke up very early. The fires of our Arabs were still burning when the camels were loaded, and the last quarter of the waning moon stood in full splendour in the heavens. It was cold and quite dark when we began our march. But red light soon showed itself in the east, then golden stripes; the air growing colder as the day approached. Yet this was very soon over, for the night turned to day wondrously fast, and as the pale sickle of the moon faded before the flaming disk of the sun, the cold gave way to heat." Ere long he had a glimpse of young life in the wady, such as, in these unchanging regions, it may have shown itself in the days of Moses.

"We had far outmarched the camels, and were awaiting them under the shadow of a rock, when two Bedouin girls, with the back of their heads veiled, but their faces bare, came near. The one was specially attractive; with great black eyes, that looked out astonished into the world; a fine nose, and teeth like veritable pearls, which shone out in two rows of radiant white amidst the golden brown of her complexion. The second, though less charming, was more lively than her sister, and like her wore only a blue cotton veil and a poor tunic of the same stuff, which reached to the knees, leaving her slender legs and small ankles and feet exposed. As soon as they saw us they left their brown goats and hid behind a rock.

"Calling them, and holding out a few piastres, the plainer one ventured first to come near us, then the other. Eager to get the proffered gift, they held out their slender but well-formed arms for it, but would not venture to take it, lest we should touch them with our 'unclean' hands. When at last, however, we had thrown the piastres so far that they had no fear of us, one of our Arabs came in sight,

and, instantly, both the girls, climbing the steep rocks on the left, were off out of sight so swiftly that they might really well be compared to gazelles. It seems that they could hardly hope to get husbands if they had approached a stranger; and they would, moreover, have had to bear reproaches and blame from their parents."[1]

In one of the side valleys close by, Palmer found a rock which the Arabs venerate as that from which Moses brought forth the waters miraculously.[2] It is surrounded with heaps of little stones, which lie also on each fragment in its immediate neighbourhood, and has the following legend connected with it: When the children of Israel had encamped beside the wondrous stream, and were resting after they had quenched their thirst, they amused themselves by throwing small stones on the rocks before them. Hence rose a custom of doing the same, which the Arabs still keep up to preserve the memory of the miracle. They think it makes Moses especially friendly; and, in this belief, any one who has a sick friend throws a small stone in his name, confident that the sufferer will soon get better through this being done.[3]

A detached rock in the south-east of Jebel Mûsa, which has some curious fissures and weather markings, has also been claimed as the rock smitten by Moses. It is an insulated block of granite about 12 feet high, and of an irregular shape. Some apertures on its surface, about twenty in number, are said to be those from which the water issued. They lie nearly in a straight line round three sides of the stone, and are for the most part 10 or 12 inches long, 2 or 3 inches broad, and from 1 to 2 inches deep, though a few

[1] *Durch Gosen*, p. 183.
[2] Exod. xvii. 6, 7. Massah = temptation. Meribah = chiding.
[3] Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*, p. 159.

are as deep as 4 inches. As to their character, Burckhardt says: "Every observer must be convinced on the slightest examination, that most of them are the work of art, though three or four may be natural, and may first have drawn attention to the stone, and have induced the monks to call it the rock of the miraculous supply of water. But not only are the holes themselves evidently artificial; the spaces between them have been chiselled to imitate the action of water on the stone, though it cannot be doubted that if water had flowed from the fissures, it must generally have taken quite a different direction. The neighbouring Arabs venerate it highly, and put grass into the fissures as offerings to the memory of Moses, in the same way as they put grass on the tombs of their saints, because it is to them the most precious gift of nature, and that on which their existence chiefly depends."[1]

A curious passage from the geologist Fraas,[2] deserves notice in this connection: "A sharp eye sees at the foot of Horeb, at a moderate height above the valley, on the smooth bare wall of rock, a number of green spots, some higher than others." Having climbed to one of them on the east of the mountain, Fraas adds, "a granite wall rose

[1] The Rev. Canon Norris, *Bible Educator*, vol. i. p. 157, adds to the miracle which actually took place, that "a perpetual running river followed the Israelites in all their forty years' wanderings; not running up hill, as some have absurdly said, but doubtless renewed at the head of every valley which they entered, making every wady a watercourse for the time, and only ceasing when they reached Kadesh Barnea, the northern limit of their wandering." But the plain of Horeb is 4,000 feet above the sea, while the course of the Israelites was alternately a descent and an ascent, first to the seashore, and then, by a series of steep ravines, to elevation after elevation in the Negeb or South Country. Nor was Kadesh the northern limit of their march, for they went beyond Hormah, which is considerably north of it; and, moreover, they had no water at Meribah, near Mount Hor. All this is only the result of a misconception of St. Paul's allegory, in which Christ, under the figure of a "spiritual Rock," is said to have followed Israel through the wilderness. (1 Cor. x. 4. See Meyer.)

[2] *Aus dem Orient*, 1867, p. 23.

perpendicularly from the débris below. A fig tree at its foot is first seen, but, as one approaches, shrubs and verdure show themselves, quickened by a small basin of water fed from a spring close at hand. This runs from the smooth face of the rock, about breast high, with the fulness of a good-sized well-pipe. But on looking more closely, the opening through which it burst out proved to be artificial. No traces can be seen of water elsewhere in the mountain wall, to betray the presence of a spring thus previously hidden behind the granite. On the whole face of the rock, in its height of forty feet, only crystals of felspar glitter, showing no indications of the water behind. The spring has been struck out of the rock by a human hand; a circumstance which reminds a geologist acquainted with the Bible, of Moses, the great student of the hills and of man, who struck a rock on Horeb and the water flowed from it."

In entering Wady Feirân from the west the mountains are of sandstone, brown-red granite, and dark porphyry, varied by green and grayish yellow rocks, which hem in the wanderer. Underfoot there is nothing but sand. After a time, however, the thorny and scant growth of the wilderness begins to be more abundant and stronger, and the sight of shrubs indicates the nearness of water and fertility. Presently a fertile spot opens, with a thread of palms, tamarisks, acacias, and other vegetation, marking the course of the streamlet of which the whole are a gift. The flow must have been much larger in former times, here and in other wadys, for one meets not a few traces of the soil having been formerly cultivated, where it is now left untilled, from the increasing drought. Along the feeble brook in Wady Feirân are the first Bedouin gardens met in the Penin-

sula, if we may use the word garden of rude enclosures of a few trees. On one side are remains of grain-houses and watch-towers, now no longer needed, as the plough has now no work in these parts. Farther on are the huts of Arabs, with a few trees among them. For a good half-hour you plod on, eastward, amidst this unusual blush of life in the midst of the desolation around. There are still five thousand palms in the wady, paying taxes to the Egyptian government; the shadoof being used to raise the water of the streamlet to their roots. As I have already said, the fatal error of requiring the taxes to be paid in charcoal is, however, constantly tending to the destruction of what trees remain, as the destruction of vegetation to procure it increases the drought, now, as it is, very great. In Wady Feirân, among other spots in the Peninsula, banks of earth are found, left by ancient lakes, when water was plentiful, fresh-water shells in the hardened mud showing its origin. The change from such means of fertility into the present state of the region, which is even more arid than the great southern desert of Palestine, must have been very gradual, so that in the days of Moses the scene may have been very different from what it is now.

The Arabs of Wady Feirân are very poor, but they are industrious. The dates of their palm clumps supply their chief food, the stones of the dates being pounded and boiled down for their goats. They eke out a living by hiring out as camel drivers, or for work in gardens, in Egypt. The population of the whole Peninsula, including that of this wady, where it is most dense, is only from four to six thousand, and the whole triangle of the Sinai region could not support more than fifty thousand. Indeed, a region made up for the far greater part of hopelessly

barren granite mountains could never have been fit to sustain any large number of human beings, even if trees covered the wild mountains wherever possible; but the narrow valleys would, of course, have been much more suitable for life than they are now, in that case.

Leaving Wady Feirân, the landscape changes, and Mount Serbal, believed by many to be the Mountain of the Law, rises in awful majesty, closing in the view.

Various points in this great centre of the mountain system of the Peninsula have had the honour ascribed to them of being that from which the law was spoken. Ebers decides for Serbal; but his verdict, we fear, can hardly be accepted after the more thorough study of the region by Major Palmer. His description of Serbal, however, well merits quotation: "Mighty and sublime, a great masterwork of Him who created the earth and the worlds, the giant peaks of Serbal, on which Moses prayed, rise to heaven from their vast foundations. How imposing its naked, stony, immense height! The sun sank to rest. The lower pinnacles, towards the west, gleamed with pure gold, while the lofty, jagged granite tops of the holy mountain were bathed in violet, red, and yellow vapour. The resplendent golden orb of the sun disappeared behind the summit, with its crown of five peaks, and the pinnacles of the giant diadem glowed in colours never to be forgotten. Every line of the rocks, high up in the ether, was hung with garlands of purple-rose and gold-opal, and while these shone wondrously, the sun once more appeared, to sink again to rest behind the lower mountains. The streaming glory round the profile of Serbal now faded, and its peaks and pinnacles began to shine with a delicate, transparent red, tender as that of a lady's fingers held in the night against a

bright light. Finally the colours died away, and when the stars came out, and the mountain drew over itself a black robe, its mass was so great that it conquered the darkness, and the majestic height could still be seen in its outlines."[1]

Mount Serbal is undoubtedly the most magnificent mountain in the Peninsula. "Serbal is a vast mass of peaks," says Dean Stanley, "which, in most points of view, may be reduced to five, the number adopted by the Bedouins. All of granite, they rise so precipitously, so column-like, from the broken ground which forms the root of the mountain, as at first sight to appear inaccessible. But they are divided by steep ravines, filled with fragments of fallen granite. . . . The summit of the highest peak is a huge block of granite, on which, as on the back of some petrified tortoise, you stand and overlook the whole Peninsula of Sinai. . . . On the northern and somewhat lower eminence are the visible remains of a building which may be of any date, from Moses to Burckhardt. A point of rock immediately below this ruin was the extreme edge of the peak. It was flanked on each side by the tremendous precipices of the two neighbouring peaks—itself as precipitous—and as we saw them overlooking the circle of desert, plain, hill, and valley, it was impossible not to feel that for the *giving* of the law, to Israel and to the world, the scene was most truly fitted. I say, 'for the *giving* of the law,' because the objections urged from the absence of any plain immediately under the mountain, for *receiving* the law, are unanswerable, or could only be answered if no such plain existed elsewhere in the Peninsula."[2]

Besides the authority of Ebers, Mount Serbal has in its favour, as the Mountain of the Law, the support of the ear-

[1] *Durch Gosen*, p. 207. [2] *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 72.

liest traditions, for it was undoubtedly identified with Sinai by all known writers, to the time of Justinian, as confirmed by the position of the episcopal city of Paran at its foot. Among modern investigators its claims are maintained by Burckhardt and Lepsius. But as there is no plain near it of sufficient size to offer camping ground to more than a fraction of so large a host as that of the Hebrews, it would have been impossible for them to approach it, or to see from below the awful splendours of the descent of God on its summit.

The traditional Mount Sinai, however, twenty-five miles to the south-east by the nearest road, advances rival claims in favour both of its southern heights—Jebel Mûsa, the hill of Moses—and of its northern face, known as Ras Sasâfeh, which is now generally considered as best meeting the requirements of the Bible narrative. An ascending pass, amidst masses of rock, with a thread of water for the most part just visible, but here and there forming clear pools shrouded in palms, leads from Wady Feirân to the second and highest stage of the great mountain labyrinth, of which Jebel Mûsa, 7,363 feet above the sea, is the centre.[2] It is one of a cluster of gigantic mountains forming a mighty altar about three and a half miles long, nearly north and south, by about one and a half from east to west: the whole, known traditionally as Mount Sinai.

Jebel Mûsa was held by Ritter[3] to be the Holy Mountain, and has for ages been consecrated as such by monkish legends and traditions, embodied as it were in the convents on its sides, still famous for their colonies of Greek ascetics.

[1] *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 40.

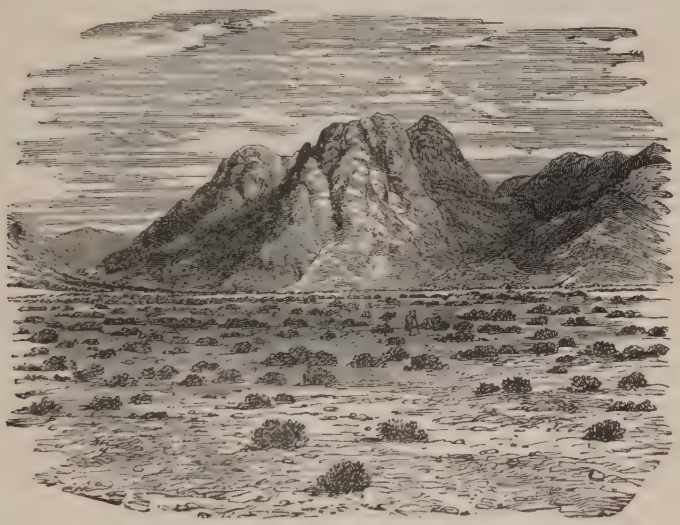
[2] Serbal rises 6,734 feet above the sea (Palmer's *Sinai*, p. 168).

[3] *Erdkunde*, vol. xiv. p. 593. D'Israeli Lord Beaconsfield—has a highly wrought chapter on Jebel Mûsa, in his *Tancred*, book iv. chap. 7.

The ascent of the mountain lies between vast heights and rocks, of the wildest and grandest character. The view from the summit comprehends a vast circle. Mount Sinai itself, and the hills which compose the district in its immediate vicinity, rise in sharp isolated conical peaks. From their steep and shattered sides huge masses have been splintered, leaving fissures rather than valleys between their remaining portions. These form the highest part of the range of mountains spread over the Peninsula; and in the winter months are very generally covered with snow, the melting of which occasions the torrents which everywhere devastate the plains below. No villages and castles, as in Europe, animate the picture. No forests, lakes, or falls of water break the silence and monotony of the scene. All has the appearance of a vast and desolate wilderness, either gray, or darkly brown, or wholly black. Few who gaze from the fearful height of the summit, upon the dreary wilderness below, will fail to be impressed with the fitness of the whole scene for the sublime and awful dispensation of the law given to Moses.[1] "The view from Jebel Mûsa," says Henniker, "where the particular aspect of the infinite complication of jagged peaks and varied ridges is seen in the greatest perfection, is as if Arabia Petræa were an ocean of lava, which, while its waves were running mountains high, had suddenly stood still."[2] But the absence of any plain at its foot is as fatal to its claims as to those of Serbal. There is no "brook that descended out of the mount,"[3] and the wady near is so rough, uneven, and narrow, that there seems no possibility of the people's "removing" and "standing afar off"[4] without their entire exclusion from the scene.

[1] Wellsted's *Travels*, vol. ii. p. 97.
[2] *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 12.
[3] Deut. ix. 21.
[4] Exod. xx. 18.

The modern Horeb of the monks, the north-west and lower face of the Jebel Mûsa, crowned with a range of magnificent cliffs, of which the highest point is known as Ras Sasâfeh,[1] has been very generally held, since it was first named for the honour by Robinson, as the true scene of the giving of the law. The best description of its features is that of Dean Stanley: "After winding through the various



RAS SASÂFEH, FROM THE PLAIN.
Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus.*

basins and cliffs which make up the range, we reached the rocky point overlooking the approach by which we had come the preceding day. The effect on us, as on every one who has seen and described it, was instantaneous. It was like the seat on the top of Serbal, but with the difference, that here was the deep wide yellow plain sweeping down to the

[1] The Willow Head.

very base of the cliffs; exactly answering to the plain on which 'the people removed and stood afar off.' Considering the almost total absence of such conjunctions of plain and mountain in this region, it is really important evidence of the truth of the narrative that one such can be found.[1]

Leaving the Wady Feirân, with its groves and its brook, the Hebrews probably availed themselves of the longest, widest, and most continuous of all the mountain valleys, the Wady Es-Sheik; the great thoroughfare of the desert, even now. It is a more circuitous route to the Holy Mount than that of Wady Selef, but to the waggons[2] and flocks, and the bulk of the host, it would be much the more easy. The chiefs might, if they chose, climb the more direct wady, but all would meet in the Wady Er Rahah, "the enclosed plain," in front of the magnificent cliffs of the Ras Sasâfeh. The awful and lengthened approach, as to some natural sanctuary, would be the fittest preparation for the coming scene. The low line of alluvial mounds at the foot of the cliff exactly answers to the "bounds" which were to keep the people off from "touching the mount." The plain itself is not broken, and unevenly and narrowly shut in, like almost all others in the range, but presents a long, retiring sweep, against which the people could remove and stand afar off. The cliff, rising like a huge altar in front of the whole congregation, and visible against the sky in lonely grandeur, from end to end of the whole plain, is the very image of "the mount that might be touched," and from which the voice of God might be heard, far and wide, over the stillness of the plain below, widened at that point to its utmost extent by the confluence of all the contiguous val-

[1] *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 75. [2] Num. vii. 3.

leys.'[1] A small eminence at the entrance of the convent valley bears the name of Aaron, as the spot from which he is believed to have witnessed the festival of the golden calf. Two points in the Bible narrative are illustrated at Sasâfeh as they are nowhere else: that which describes Moses as descending the mountain without seeing the people, and the shout of the camp being heard, before the cause could be ascertained. "Any one now descending the mountain path which leads from the summit, would hear," says Captain Wilson, "the sounds borne through the silence of the plain, but would not see the plain itself until he emerged from the lateral wady; and, when he did so, he would be immediately under the precipitous cliff of Sasâfeh." There is, besides, a brook which runs down the Wady Leija, sufficiently near to justify its being described as coming "down out of the mount," in the account given of the strewing of the dust of the golden calf on its waters.[2] It is a weighty argument, moreover, in favour of Ras Sasâfeh, that all the scientific members of the Ordnance Survey of Sinai were of opinion that in it they saw the very "Mount of God." The plain below it, they tell us, strengthens this conclusion, as it is four hundred acres in size, while the addition of the openings into the wadys around raises the standing room in full view of the mountain to nine hundred and forty acres.

Taking all these circumstances into consideration, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the law was delivered from the top of Ras Sasâfeh, to the Israelites encamped on the plain of Er Rahah, "the palm of the hand," below; unless, indeed, it be found that the height on the other side of the plain, known as Jebel Sena, but never yet ascended,

[1] *Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 42–44. [2] Exod. xxxii. 20. Deut. ix. 21.

should, as Dean Stanley thinks possible, prove to unite even greater claims to the honour.

But the Hebrews had rough work on their hands before they finally reached the Mountain of the Law. While still at the entrance of Feirân, the inhabitants of the oasis in its farther depths had determined to resist their advance. They belonged to the Bedouin race known as Amalek, originally from Yemen in southern Arabia,[1] but in the days of Moses the chief tribe of the Peninsula and of Southern Palestine.[2] The place and time for an attack were well chosen; for man and beast in the Hebrew camp had suffered severely on the two days' march from Dophkah, after the cisterns or springs had been exhausted. The granite walls, heated by the terrible sun, reflected a burning glow on the host; for the hand cannot be laid on them at midday without a sense of scorching. Mutiny and tumult had again broken out under the agonies of thirst, and had risen to such a height that Moses began to fear that he would presently be stoned.[3] But a miracle had supervened to supply their wants, and the rocks, smitten by the same rod as had divided the sea, had yielded water to the camp. They must still, however, have been in disorder when the hosts of Amalek, united, it may be, with the Egyptian garrison of Dophkah, burst on them. The inhabitants of the oasis had for centuries paid tribute to the Pharaohs, and, in return, no Egyptian soldiers were allowed to cross their boundaries without permission;[4] but this would readily be granted under the circumstances. Living during the colder months in the lower districts, they had ascended, as the Arabs still do, on the approach of summer, to Feirân, by much the richest of the

[1] Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*, p. 51.
[2] Num. xiii. 29; xiv. 43, 45. 1 Sam. xxvii. 8.
[3] Exod. xvii. 4.
[4] *Quarda*, vol. xi. p. 184.

upland valleys: the pastures being longer green at such an altitude. It was a vital necessity to drive back the Hebrews, if the priceless treasure of these scanty feeding places was to be preserved for their flocks. Then, as now, nothing was so frequent a cause of strife as the possession of such fertile spots.[1] Fortunately, the smaller local tribes were friendly, the Kenites even entering into a kind of league with Moses, and the Midianites, connected with him, through his marriage with the daughter of Jethro, their sheik and emir, showing hearty kindness to the passing host.

It was a critical moment for the Hebrews. Their way to the Holy Mountain was barred by fierce swarms who knew every inch of the ground, and to whom desert warfare was a delight, and plunder of caravans a recognized source of wealth. To oppose warriors so skilful and brave, there was a vast multitude of escaped slaves, encumbered with women, children, baggage, and herds, and provided only in a small proportion with arms, that is, with shields and swords or spears, or with bows. Their very numbers were, indeed, their greatest danger: but this Moses foresaw. Keeping back the great bulk of the camp, therefore, he directed that a chosen body should be gathered from the various tribes, fitted at once by their bravery, and their possession and knowledge of arms, to meet the enemy with success.[2] It is on this occasion that we meet first with the name of Joshua,[3] the future successor of Moses, but then a young man of the tribe of Ephraim; the son of Nun,[4] of whom only the name

[1] Burckhardt's *Syria*, p. 628.

[2] The arms, recovered from the Egyptian soldiers drowned at the Red Sea, would equip a great many. The spoil in gold, etc., also, gained after the destruction of Pharaoh's host, no doubt aided the Hebrews greatly in their outlay on the Tabernacle.

[3] His name was at this time Hoshea = "Help;" but it was afterwards changed to Joshua = "He whose help is Jehovah;" which is used here from its being the name by which he came to be known.

[4] Nun = "Fish" in Aramaic.

is known. Acting as commander, the future hero, in the end, after a fiercely disputed contest, inflicted such a defeat on Amalek as rescued the Hebrews from any further annoyance while in the Peninsula. But though they reaped the fruits of the victory, they were fitly reminded, as the people of God, that pride and self-trust were out of place, since it had been gained only by the blessing of Jehovah. To enforce this magnificent lesson, Moses had taken his stand, at the opening of the battle, on the top of a spur of rock visible over the wady, and there interceded for them with uplifted hands, through the whole course of the fight. Nor had it remained unnoticed that he bore aloft the wonder-working rod of God, which had already done so much for them, nor that success wavered when his weary arms sank with exertion, and was only finally secured when Aaron, his brother, and Hur, the grandfather of Bezaleel—the future constructor of the Tabernacle — continuously held them up.

Such an attack, at such a time, sank deep into the hearts of Israel, and kindled in them their first abiding national hatred towards another race. True to the rules of Arab warfare, this first foe had "met them in the way, and had smitten the hindmost, even all that were feeble, behind the host,"[1] when every one was almost equally faint and weary. Henceforward a new battle cry, like the blazon on the Egyptian standards with which they had long been so familiar, was given by Moses to the people—Jehovah Nissi, "Jehovah is my banner"—and Amalek was proscribed as an enemy of their God, since he had shown himself that of His people. "Because his hand is against the throne of Jehovah, therefore God has war with Amalek from genera-

[1] Deut. xxv. 18. See vol. i. p. 301.

tion to generation."[1] said the great leader, and, by Divine direction, recorded this in "the Book," in which, even thus early, the ways of God to the chosen race were being recorded.

A victory over so formidable a foe must have been of great importance, in kindling a spirit of manhood and nationality among the Hebrews, for Amalek was one of the greatest peoples of these remote ages. Even in Abraham's time they are mentioned as inhabiting the regions southwest of the Dead Sea;[2] and Balaam, a few years after this battle, speaks of them as "the first of the nations;" that is, as having been a mighty race from what was then a distant antiquity.[3] Their territory extended, in fact, over the whole upper part of the Sinai Peninsula, including also the Negeb, or southern country of Palestine, and even a part of its central hills.[4] But well-nigh a thousand years before Christ they had almost ceased to be a people,[5] the sleepless hatred of Israel having nearly exterminated them. There still remain, however, on the Sinai Peninsula, some ancient dwellings which may possibly preserve a last trace of them. These are similar in form to the "bothan" or bee-hive houses in Scotland—built of rough and massive stones, about 5 feet high and 40 or 50 feet in circumference, with no windows, and only a small door about 20 inches high. In the walls, each successive course of stones is made to project slightly inwards beyond the one below it, so as to form a dome, the top of which consists of one large slab of stone. These houses are generally found in groups, and near them

[1] This seems the best translation of Exod. xvii. 16. See Rosenmüller, *Scholia in Exod.*, p. 512; also *Clericus*, in loc.; and Michaelis, *Bibl. Orient. Nov.*, part iii. p. 195.

[2] Gen. xiv. 7.

[3] Num. xxiv. 7. See vol. i. p. 302.

[4] Judg. xii. 15.

[5] 1 Sam. xxx. 1-19.

are often seen the ruins of tombs—circles of massive stones —like those known in England and Scotland as Druids' circles.[1] In the Wady Biyar, about thirty miles nearly north of Ras Sasâfeh, Professor Palmer found similar houses, which he thus describes: "They consisted of two detached houses, on separate hills, and a group of five on the side of

Ancient Dwellings in Wady Biyar, Sinai.
From Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*, by permission.

a higher eminence. The first two had been used as Arab burial-places, but at least three out of the five remained untouched. Their dimensions averaged 7 feet high by 8 feet in diameter, but one was fully 10 feet high and 8 feet in diameter, inside. They were circular, with an oval top. . . . In the centre of each was a cist, and beside it a

[1] Rev. F. W. Holland, in *The Recovery of Jerusalem*, p. 543.

smaller hole, both roughly lined with stones, and covered with slabs of stone, over which earth had accumulated. . . . In the smaller cist the earth showed signs of having undergone the action of fire, and, in one or two, small pieces of charcoal were found. The doorways, which are about two feet square, are admirably made, with lintel and door-posts. All the stones used in the construction are so carefully selected as almost to give the appearance of being hewn, and those in some of the doorways have certainly been worked; if not with any instrument, at least rubbed smooth with other stones. A flint arrow-head and some small shells were found in some of the houses. The country all around is covered with them; every hill-side having some remains of them on it. Close to the houses were some stone circles, and similar circles were found, also, in the centre of a number, as if the houses had been used as tombs, on the death of their owners; as in the case of the Indian of the Upper Amazon, mentioned by Wallace. There would seem to have been a large settlement, in this part, of the race by whom the houses were built."[1]

A pleasant episode in the excitement and gigantic labours which had devolved on Moses for the past three months, occurred shortly after the conflict with Amalek. He had sent back Zipporah—"the little bird"—his wife, with their two children, to her father Jethro, for safety, while he had gone on to Egypt; but now that he was once again near—for Jethro's district was not far from the Sacred Mountain—he had the joy of seeing his little household brought safely back to him by his father-in-law. The very names of his two sons[2] would recall the time when he felt himself an

[1] Palmer, *The Desert of the Tih*, p. 10. Wallace's (A. R.) *Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro*, London, 1889, p. 346.

[2] See p. 135.

alien in a strange land—"driven out" from his native Egypt—and remind him of the help God had given him in his flight from the sword of Pharaoh.[1] The meeting with Jethro was thoroughly oriental. On his being announced, Moses went out to meet him, and kneeling down, touched the earth with his forehead,[2] then kissing his father-in-law's hand, rose and kissed him also on both cheeks[3]—each asking the other of his welfare with all the due Arab prolixity still held courteous—as they slowly made their way to the tent. Then came the narration by Moses of all that had happened since they parted—a story which decided Jethro, if ever he had wavered, to honour Jehovah as "greater than all gods;" since, "in the very matter in which Egypt had dealt proudly against Israel, He had been above them."[4] Burnt-offerings and sacrifices presently followed "before God;" that is, at the spot in the camp specially set apart for public religious exercises. At the subsequent usual feast on the portion of the victims not consumed on the altar,[5] Aaron and the elders of Israel sat down with Jethro and Moses, and thus a solemn league of friendship was formally ratified between the tribe of Jethro and the Hebrews, which lasted through the whole future history of both peoples.

To Jethro was due a modification in the practice of Moses, in a very important point. Till now, the great leader had, alone, heard all causes brought before him from the host; giving counsel as the mouthpiece of God, deciding the various disputes, and instructing all, as the case suggested, in the statutes and laws of which God was presently to give them a fuller revelation.[6] But the strength of

[1] Exod. xviii. 3, 4.
[2] Meaning of the verb Shahah used here, Exod. xviii. 7. See Gesenius.
[3] Furrer, p. 9. *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 24.
[4] Literal rendering of Exod. xviii. 11. [5] Exod. xviii. 12. [6] Exod. xviii. 16.

no one man could long endure such a strain, and by Jethro's advice a whole series of greater and lesser judges were appointed; the lowest to hear the disputes or questions of each ten persons in the camp, and the others, in rising dignity, those of each fifty, hundred, and thousand[1]—only appeals from the last being brought to Moses himself.

This great and salutary reform having been effected, Jethro returned to his own district, where, we are told, he was the priest of "Midian," while, also, evidently the highest person in the community. In Ancient Arabia, it has been found that "high priests" preceded "kings:" uniting the royal and sacerdotal offices in their person. It was thus in the kingdom of Seba, the Sheba of the Bible. In Assyria, also, there were "high priests of Assur" before there were kings: that is, the State was represented by a divinity, whose name it bore, or who took his name from it, and his chief minister was supreme, the secular king rising only later. Church and State were thus in effect one, as in the Hebrew constitution. Jethro's position may very probably be illustrated by this very ancient mode of government, which, apparently, explains, also, the position of Melchizedek, King of Salem, but also "priest of the Most High God."[2]

[1] The similarity of this arrangement to the English system of tithings, hundreds, etc., is striking.

[2] Glaser's *Skizze der Geschichte und Geographie Arabiens.* 2 vols. Berlin, 1890.

CHAPTER IX.

AT SINAI.

THE distance to Mount Sinai, from the point on the Gulf of Suez at which the Hebrews had crossed what was then the upper end of the Red Sea, is only about one hundred and seventy miles, including the windings of the route; but it was not till the third month after the Exodus[1] that the host at last pitched its tents under the shadow of the Mountain. They had rested at various points for refreshment or supplies; now they were to camp on the same spot for nearly eleven months, while they were being finally organized as a nation.

The great plain of Er Rahah—the "palm of the hand"—which is large enough to give ample space for the tents of a host of more than two million souls,[2] had doubtless been selected from the first by Moses; to whom every glen and mountain of the whole region had become familiar during his long stay with Jethro. It was, indeed, the only level ground in the whole district which could accommodate the multitude as a whole.[3] Nor could a fitter theatre have been chosen for the great events which were soon to happen. The Sacred Mountain, known in its different peaks, as Sinai, "the jagged;"[4] Horeb, "the dry," or "bare;" or,

[1] Exod. xix. 1. [2] Sir Henry James, in *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. p. 442.

[3] See the map published by the Ordnance Survey.

[4] Ebers explains "Sinai" as "the Mount of the Desert of Sin," but the name is more probably derived from that of the Moon-god - not goddess—"Sin," a deity of

simply, the Mount of God,[1] rose in awful grandeur before the whole camp: a stupendous height of granite rocks, torn into chasms and precipices, and shooting aloft in a wild confusion of pinnacles, worthy the names they bore. Valleys cut off its stupendous form, on all sides, from the heights round, so that it stood apart, as if separated from all else for the lofty honours now awaiting it. On the south, the heights of "Sinai" rose with overpowering majesty from the Sebaijeh plain, like a huge granite monolith, 2,000 feet into the sky; the pinnacles of the central hill, rent and shattered by natural convulsions, towering still more sublimely aloft; while at the north end, or Horeb, a wall of naked rock, 1,200 to 1,500 feet high, rose in awful grandeur, directly in front of the Hebrew camp. The lengthened approach, as to some natural sanctuary, through a framework of gigantic mountains, had been, itself, a fitting preparation for the coming scene. The plain reached without an interruption, almost to the very cliff; a low border of alluvial mounds, at its foot, unseen except at close approach, providing "bounds" to keep the people from actually coming to the mount.[2] Over the long and open sweep they could hereafter "remove and stand afar off." But from every point the wall of rock rose into the sky, in its lonely

the earliest ages in Western Asia. Sinai was, apparently, the sanctuary of "Sin" in these regions, and thus a "holy place" from remote ages, before Moses led the Hebrews to it.

[1] Exod. iii. 1; xvi. 1. Deut. i. 2.

[2] "The plain slopes gently to the foot of the mount, with a surface as smooth as if it had been artificially prepared. It is quite capable of having contained the entire encampment of the Israelites, for it should never be forgotten that their ordinary tentage must have occupied very little space, like that of the Arabs now. . . I was astonished at the literal truth of the Scripture passage which speaks of the mountain that might be touched. I often wondered what it meant, for it seemed a natural question respecting any mountain, 'Where it commenced.' Now, however, when I saw Mount Sinai, the literal truth of the whole description flashed upon me."—*Life of Dr. Duff*, vol. i. pp. 400, 401.

grandeur, like a huge altar, in front of the whole congregation ;[1] an awful throne from which the voice of God might be heard, far and wide, over the stillness of the great plain below.

Nor were other features of supreme importance awanting. Water and pasture were essential to the existence of the host and its herds, and both were found in greater abundance in this part than in any other in the district. In the upland valleys to which the march had led them —for Er Rahah is more than 4,000 feet above the sea —springs and brooks which are never dry are unusually numerous, and must have been well known to Moses beforehand, for there would be no water-course in all these mountains which he had not, in his long shepherd life, frequented. The heights might, moreover, be wild and bare, but the presence of water insured many spots of pasture in the countless glens, such as Wady Sheik and Wady Sebaijeh, and Wady Feirân was close at hand with its exceptional richness.[2] Here, therefore, the tribes pitched their tents and awaited the further commands of Moses.

Everything around was in keeping with the purpose for which the great Leader had brought them hither. Sinai had already been, for an unknown time,[3] "the Mount of the Moon-god ;" and a sacredness still clings so ineffaceably to it in the mind of the tribes of the Peninsula, that great yearly religious feasts are held by them in its neighbourhood,[4] and pilgrimages made to it from every part of the Arab world. In such a spot every impression would act on the mind with the utmost force.

[1] *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 43 ; and Knobel's *Exodus*, p. 189.

[2] As to the water and pasture of the part, see Burckhardt, *Syrien*, pp. 918, 927. Tischendorff, *Reise*, vol. i. p. 244.

[3] Exod. iii. 1.

[4] Burckhardt's *Syrien*, p. 800.

Safe in the bosom of the mountains, the Hebrews were now ready for the higher organization required to constitute them a free, independent, and self-governing nation. In this, their peculiar relation to God determined the character of the institutions needed. He had redeemed them from slavery, cared for them in the wilderness, and aided them in battle; borne Himself, indeed, as their divine guardian, and marked them as the special objects of His regard. Nor could they fail to be impressed with the dignity thus conferred on them; for what other people had such a Protector? Egypt, with all its glory and its host of tutelary divinities, had been utterly humbled before Him. Till now unknown among the crowd of gods acknowledged by the nations, Jehovah had shown himself to be greater than all, and had utterly put them to shame. This Great God above all gods was the Leader and Strength of Israel.

To be thus the Chosen People involved, however, many obligations on their side. They enjoyed this amazing honour as the descendants of one who had left his native country that he might be faithful to his religion, and who had received the promises they were now to realize, as a reward for his obedience to the Divine will, and the honour he rendered it in his daily life. It was no less obligatory that they, as a nation, should, like their great forefather, "obey His voice and keep His charge, His commandments, His statutes, and His laws;"[1] and to secure this it was necessary that these should be so plainly made known, as to furnish a permanent standard and rule of conduct for them in succeeding ages.

The unique relations in which they stood to Jehovah required, however, that the laws thus to be established

[1] Gen. xxvi. 5.

should embrace not only their religious, but also their civil duties; for Jehovah, besides being their God, was also their invisible King. They were, in fact, under a theocracy, or reign of God, who was alike their spiritual and their temporal Head. Nor was such a constitution new to them; for in Egypt the gods had been honoured as the supreme rulers of the land, acting through the Pharaoh, one of their number; and he and they had been honoured by a vast priesthood as its divine sovereigns. But the gods of Egypt had been mere human inventions, and their government a vain figment of superstition and craft. Jehovah, who had chosen the Hebrews in all their weakness as His "first-born," was the true God, and His government was no fable like that of the gods of other nations. He had delivered them from Egypt and from Amalek, from hunger and from thirst, and had guided them on their way, and now showed Himself in their midst in "the fiery, cloudy" pillar of His presence. No human king could have cared for them with a more minute and sedulous regard; and this care was, henceforth, to be extended to all their national and private life, by the proclamation of laws which He would require them to obey for their good.

Two Divine "covenants" had already been made with man—the first with Noah; the second with Abraham, as the ancestor of Israel. A third was now to be established with his descendants, in fulfilment of the promises made centuries before. The details of its institution as given in Exodus are sublime, beyond those of any other transaction in the Sacred History anterior to the story of the Incarnation. But we need not wonder at them, for if, in the case of a single soul that cries to God, He draws near to enter into spiritual relations with it; how much more might He

be expected to descend, as we are told He did, on Sinai, to meet a whole people, now, alone of all the nations on the earth, looking to Him as their God, and desiring to dedicate themselves openly to His service and glory?

The cloud which had gone before the host on its march had settled over the Sacred Mountain; thus transferring thither, in the eyes of all, the visible symbol of the Divine Presence. To that mysterious centre Moses had hitherto drawn near, to receive the Divine commands; and he now ascended the mountain, which had become as it were the throne of God, to approach Him, as before, in this awful veil. Having done so, he received a commission such as has never, besides, been vouchsafed to man. He was to descend and tell the "house of Jacob," in God's name, that if they obeyed His voice and kept His covenant, they would be to Him a peculiar treasure above all nations, for all the earth was His; and that as their King, He would make them a kingdom of priests to Him, and a consecrated people. Need we wonder that the heads of tribes and lesser divisions of the host, summoned by Moses to hear such a communication, answered forthwith, as if with one voice, in the name of their brethren, that they pledged themselves to do all that Jehovah had spoken?[1]

The way was now open for the formal adoption of Israel as the people of God, set apart by Him, as His instruments, to teach mankind religious truth, and prepare them for the final development of His kingdom upon earth, under His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Three days' preparation were commanded as for a high festival; and, in anticipation of the near approach of their Divine King, their persons and clothes, soiled and stained by travel, were to be cleansed,

[1] Exod. xix. 7, 8.

and all defilement avoided. The nations around made themselves ready, thus, for the approach of their monarchs, and Israel might well do equal honour to its almighty Head. Only an invited few, however, were to go up into the mountain, to His immediate presence. No others were to approach it on pain of death. It was, as it were, His secret chamber, from which, as with earthly kings, all but those summoned by Himself must keep away or perish.[1] As His abode for the time, it was holy, and as such, consecrated to Him alone as His "pavilion round about Him."

The interval must have strained the expectation of all, and filled every heart with conflicting emotions. Open to the profoundest impressions by the very awe of the preparation, they awaited the event. At last, on the morning of the third day, the peaks of the mountain were seen veiled in thick clouds, through which lightnings quivered vividly and unintermittently, as if the vast height were aflame; terrible thunders leaped from crag to crag, and reverberated in multiplied echoes, like the sound of mighty trumpets announcing the approach of God. The phenomena of thunderstorms were in all ages associated by the Hebrews, as by other early and simple races, with the Divine presence,[2] and were its fitting accompaniments when Jehovah now actually drew nigh. All nature was moved, and seemed to tremble before Him. The people had been led out by Moses to see a spectacle so august, but its terrors awed small and great; for as they gazed, the mountain appeared to smoke like a furnace, and to reel on its foundations. The scene realizes itself best from the impressions retained of it in after ages, and embodied by the inspired poets of the race:—

[1] To enter the presence of an Eastern monarch, uninvited, was death. Esth. iv. 11.

[2] Ps. xviii. 9-15; xxix. 3-9.

"The earth shook and trembled:
The foundations of the mountains moved and were troubled:

* * * * * *

He bowed the heaven and came down,
And darkness was under His feet.
He rode upon a cherub and did fly:
Yea, He did fly upon the wings of the wind.
He made darkness His secret place;
His pavilion round Him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies." [1]

"The earth shook: the heavens also dropped at the presence of God;
Even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel." [2]

"His lightnings enlightened the world:
The earth saw and trembled;
The hills melted like wax at the presence of Jehovah,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth." [3]

Jehovah might Himself be invisible, but what god of Egypt could proclaim his presence with such awful sublimity? No wonder that the Hebrews shrank to the utmost limits of the plain, to get as far as they might from such overpowering terrors.

But if the sight presented were august, the words which sounded above the thunders were still more so.

While the people were still marshalled at the foot of the heights, Moses had ascended into the thick cloud above, and now there fell on the ear of the multitude, words, simple, indeed, and easily understood, but so full of deepest import, as to have formed, ever since, the basis of all morals and advancement.

To engage the sympathies and interest, first, of those immediately addressed, and, after them, of all ages, Jehovah

[1] Ps. xviii. 7-11. [2] Ps. lxviii. 8. [3] Ps. xcvii. 4, 5.

condescended to reveal Himself in the relations most fitted to call forth loving obedience. To have proclaimed His power or greatness alone, or even His awful holiness, would have established no tender bonds between Him and those whom He had chosen as His people. Instead of this, He disclosed Himself as the God whose wondrous guidance they had recognized, and whose Power had been displayed on their behalf—who had led them forth from Egypt; opening a path for them through the sea, and overthrowing the mighty Pharaoh and his hosts. Thus shown to be the God of gods, He yet offered Himself as the special Guardian and Father of Israel, if its sons, on their side, maintained their fidelity to Him. He was no invention of the imagination; no mere symbol of the powers of Nature, like the idols of Egypt; but had proved Himself a strong Help to those who put their trust in Him. He was no cold abstraction, like the gods of the Nile, incapable of sympathy with man or loving condescension, to engage the intellect and heart. He was present with them, even now; speaking to them in human language, and drawing them to Himself by every inducement of tenderness.

But though thus near and thus gracious; though thus distinctly revealing Himself as the One, Only, Living God, with all the attributes of strict Personality; He was still the Invisible, of whom no likeness must be attempted. As a contrast to the image worship of Egypt, to which the Hebrews were accustomed, this prohibition was elaborately and separately enforced. There must be no symbol borrowed from the heavenly bodies, as in so many cases in heathenism; nor from the animal creation around, as in Egypt; nor from the fishes or sea creatures, as in Palestine and Assyria. Moreover, the awful name of Jehovah must not

be given to any of the vain and shadowy idol gods;[1] for, compared with Him, all else that is worshipped as divine is an idle vanity. To keep holy the Sabbath, ceasing from all work on the seventh day, was a custom already followed from antiquity—perhaps from the days of Adam—but it was now enforced with renewed strictness, as needed to deepen religious feeling; to provide for its constant reinvigoration; and even as a merciful rest for man and beast. That honour should be paid to parents was also of great moment for all ages, but especially when, as yet, morality had no high sanctions, and barbarism largely prevailed. Not a few nations of antiquity were wont to put their aged fathers or mothers to death, or to abandon them when helpless.[2] Among ancient races a mother generally stood in an inferior position, and, on the death of her husband, became subject to her eldest son. But it was now commanded that the son, even if he were the head of the family, should honour his mother as he had honoured his father. Human life was little valued in antiquity, but it was now proclaimed, "Thou shalt do no murder." Man was created in the image of God, and therefore his life should be sacred. The old world was poisoned to the core by prevailing unchastity, for even the gods were represented as impure. But the Voice from Sinai commanded, "Thou shalt not be unchaste."[3] Property was declared sacred, and theft stamped as a crime, as was also false witness. Nor was only the outward act condemned, for even the thought of evil was denounced in the words "Thou shalt not covet."

[1] This is the meaning given by Graetz to the words: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. *Geschichte der Juden*, vol. i. p. 38.

[2] Darwin tells us that the Terra del Fuegians do so at this time. *Naturalist's Voyage*, p. 214.

[3] Graetz notices that the word used includes all forms of impurity.

What, in comparison with a moment like this, was the whole record of the Indian, Egyptian, or other nations, however ancient—with all their wisdom, or their gigantic creations of temples, pyramids, and colossi? The transaction on Sinai was for all time and for the life beyond. It laid the foundation of true morality and human dignity among mankind. It was the birth hour of a people differing from all yet seen. The simple but profound truths of a spiritual God of whom no likeness was to be made—a Being who draws to Himself the oppressed and wretched;[1] of the veneration to be shown to parents; of chastity; of the sacredness of human life and of property; of truth between man and man; and of the necessity of a clear conscience, were first revealed at Sinai, as a legacy for all ages.

Antiquity had doubtless its high morals, taught by illustrious minds, but they had failed to impress themselves on the masses of mankind, since they wanted the necessary sanction of Divine authority, and fell on the ear only as abstract precepts. But the Ten Commandments, proclaimed by God Himself; not only with an awful majesty, but with the attractions of Infinite love, and the terrors of

[1] Widely spread tradition, says Strabo, makes the Jews descendants of the Egyptians. A certain Moses, a priest, dissatisfied with life on the Nile, withdrew from it, and, with him, many who honoured the Great God. Moses taught that the Egyptians acted foolishly in making the gods like the beasts and the ox, and condemned the Greeks also, who gave them a human form. God, he said, was no other than that One who surrounds us all, and even the land and sea that One whom we call Heaven, and World, and Nature. But who of all endowed with reason can venture to make a likeness of such an one? Therefore all images were forbidden. They might consecrate a temple for themselves and honour the holy place - but it must have no image in it. When Moses had said this, and much more of the same tenor, he won over many thoughtful men to his views, and led them to the place where Jerusalem is now. Their descendants for a time continued true to their pure life and fear of God. But, afterwards, a superstitious priesthood got the power over them; then tyrants; and from superstition rose the laws about food which still prevail, and also those about circumcision, and the custom of having eunuchs. "The Egyptians," says Tacitus (*Hist.*, v. 4), "worship many animals and images made by their own hands; the Jews recognize only one God, and that with the mind alone."

unbending righteousness; stood out, forever, as laws which henceforth demanded the reverent obedience of all.

Nor was there a less marked difference between the duties they enforced on men towards their fellows, and the practice till then prevailing on this point. There had been many laws on the subject, but they were those of the oppressor, laid on the weak as a yoke; of the strong, for his own advantage, to keep the multitude in feeble dependence. The first laws proclaiming social equality were now revealed, and sent abroad amongst men as the leaven of a higher and nobler future. The evils of caste and social proscription were thus condemned. The Israelites had come to Sinai as trembling slaves, but they returned to their tents, after hearing the words of God from its summit, a Sacred People of God, a Nation of Priests, the Peculiar Treasure of Jehovah. Henceforth, they were to be the teachers of mankind, and, as such, to bless all races.

But the great truths announced from the Mountain would have been forgotten if left without a permanent record. They were therefore engraved on two Tables of Stone, that they might be remembered for ever, and these tables were ordered to be kept in the Sacred Ark, which, when made, would be the central object in the National Sanctuary. It was necessary, moreover, that the obligations imposed by the "Ten Words," should be explained in detail, for guidance in public and personal life. Special subordinate laws were, therefore, added. That Jehovah had redeemed the whole people from Egypt was seen to imply the essential equality of all its members. There were to be no slaves amongst them. No Hebrew should either sell himself, or be sold, for life. If any one had forfeited his liberty, he was to serve only six years, and to be free on the seventh.

Those who despised their parents, or committed deliberate murder, were to be put to death—even the sanctuary affording no refuge, if they fled to it. The murder of a non-Israelitish slave was to be punished, and one injured by his master, even to the extent of losing a tooth, was at once to be made free. Laws fixed the penalty for injuries to property, even when the hurt was not designed. Chastity was protected by strict enactments. The laws respecting the treatment of widows and orphans, to secure them from injustice, and to wake pity for their helplessness, were especially precise. Even foreigners who connected themselves with the tribes were to enjoy the protection of their laws; for Israel was never to forget that it had been a stranger in Egypt, and its sons must not treat others as they themselves had been treated there. For the poor, special provision, on the most generous scale, was made; and every seventh year all the fields, vineyards, and olive trees were left wholly to them. Three yearly feasts were appointed, at which all the men should assemble at one centre, before God. Sacrifices to be offered habitually were assumed as already established, but the details of rites were left for future legislation.

A short digest of these laws, thus marked throughout by righteousness, and by a spirit of love and tenderness, was forthwith to be written down in a book, by Moses, as the Code of the new nation—the Book of the Covenant—obedience to which was the condition of God's fulfilling His promises to them. This book was apparently intrusted to the Levites—who formed the educated class of the nation.

Such inter-relations of earth and heaven bore in them, for Israel and mankind, the germs of the loftiest national and individual character. Nor is it wonderful, that, as ages passed and trouble darkened over a race thus set apart by

Jehovah as His own, they should gradually have developed in its sons an assured belief that He would reveal Himself as the Messiah, to effect for them a second still greater redemption than that from Egypt. Words of such human sympathy, coming from One so infinitely exalted and so absolutely holy, opened a new religious era, of which the incarnation of the Divine Son was only the predestined culmination.

The solemn ratification of the covenant thus made was in keeping with the astonishing details of its proclamation. A mysterious presence, made known as the Angel of Jehovah, would henceforth go before the Hebrews, if they obeyed His voice, and open their way to the land which had of old been given to their fathers; but everything would turn on their fidelity to this covenant with Him. If, on their part, they loyally obeyed Him as their God; He, on His, was ready formally to seal the amazing transaction. Moses, with Aaron and his two sons—Nadab, "the generous" or "noble," and Abihu, "He, God, is my Father"—and seventy of the elders of Israel, were summoned to the Holy Mount; all but Moses, however, being required to worship afar off. An altar, of earth or unhewn stones,[1] was built at the foot of the mountain, and beside it were set up twelve stones as memorial pillars, to witness that the covenant had been duly accepted and confirmed by each tribe.[2] Burnt offerings were then consumed on the altar, and thank-offerings presented, the first-born sons of chosen

[1] Exod. xx. 24, 26. Altars were to be built either of earth or of unhewn stone. In antiquity the former were very common, and were known as "grassy altars," "altars of turf," from the sods laid on them to bind them together. If of stone, no iron was to touch the stones; they were to be left as God made them. In no case were altars to have steps to them. To prevent the legs being uncovered, the approach, if needed, was to be by a slope. A similar law, for the same reason, obtained among the Romans.

[2] Gen. xxviii. 18; xxxi. 45.

families serving as priests; no special priesthood having been as yet appointed.[1]

Then followed the formal ratification. Putting half of the blood in basins, Moses sprinkled the altar with it, and forthwith read to all the assembly, from "the Book of the Covenant," the written words of the Ten Commandments and the laws subsequently given; the people answering, after he had done so, "All that Jehovah hath commanded we will do, and be obedient." The other half of the blood was then sprinkled over the representatives of the people, as "the blood of the covenant which Jehovah had made with them;" in accordance with the custom of antiquity, which thus consecrated the offerer to his God. This sprinkling of the altar and of the people was a counterpart of the established forms by which the parties to a covenant bound themselves to its faithful performance. Such transactions were confirmed among the Arabs and other races, by the parties to it exchanging blood taken from their own persons; sometimes tasting each other's blood;[2] at others mixing it with wine and drinking it,[3] after dipping the points of their swords into it:[4] the idea, in all cases, being, that they thus became one blood, and as such had entered into a bond of indissoluble friendship. In the Sinai covenant the same thought was embodied, but in a more befitting expression.

[1] So the Targums, justly, in connection with Exod. xxii. 29, by which first-born sons were consecrated to Jehovah.

[2] Herod., i. 74. Tac., *Ann.*, xii. 47.

[3] "We recited the Fatihah (opening chapter of the Koran), and after solemn pledges of mutual and inviolable faith, each of us opened a vein of his left arm, somewhat above the elbow, letting the blood run down and mingle in a brass cup. . . . Out of this cup we drank, each, a full draught, becoming thus, according to Bedouin usage, 'brothers' for life and death." *Hermann Agha*, by Gifford Palgrave, p. 128. Stanley constantly speaks of having taken part, among the native races of Africa, in a similar custom, which had the same binding power of creating brotherhood.

[4] Herod., iv. 70.

The blood consecrated to Jehovah, poured in part on His altar, and in part sprinkled on themselves, made them one with Him: showed that He and they, henceforth, stood in the closest relations; and pledged both Him and them, by the most solemn obligation, to be faithful to a covenant thus ratified.[1]

But amidst all these amazing incidents, an event occurred which showed how the religious tone of the people had suffered, from the influences of their previous history. Long residence in a country so idolatrous as Egypt had had its inevitable result in winning them over more or less to a sympathy with the observances seen on every hand. Not only had they been in the midst of the degrading religion of Egypt: the Asiatic tribes of the Delta, around them, had a special idolatry of their own. Some, indeed, maintain that an invincible repugnance must have been felt by the Hebrews, as Asiatics, to the Egyptian gods, and trace their heathen notions to the related Semitic peoples with whom they had been in contact. Thus, Lengerke shows how they would naturally derive them, not only from the Hyksos and other Eastern races already in Egypt, but from the position of Goshen, at the entrance to the country from the north-east, and hence open to the easy introduction of the idolatry of Western Asia. The worship of the Canaanites must, besides, have been familiar to them before their migration to the Nile, and would be kept alive in their memories by the intercourse between the two countries; while the star worship of the neighbouring Arab tribes could not be unknown, as the route to the mines in their districts was much in use. The worship of Moloch, a Babylonian god adopted in Canaan, seems, indeed, to have been practised by the Hebrews

[1] Bähr, *Symbolik*, vol. ii. pp. 420 ff.

while still in Egypt. They had apparently already, while there, learned to devote their first-born children to that hideous idol, as a burnt sacrifice.[1] Many details of the Mosaic laws, in fact, seem to allude, directly, to this god; as where Jehovah claims for Himself the first-born. The scapegoat of the Day of Atonement[2] was the counterpart of offerings sent into the wilderness to Moloch. The ass was sacrificed to him, but must, in Israel, have its neck broken, if not redeemed.[3] The stern prohibition of any payment for impurity being accepted by the priests for the worship of Jehovah,[4] was, moreover, evidently aimed at the licentiousness of the service of Ashtoreth, the Asiatic Venus.[5] Jeroboam's calf-worship, as we shall see, was due to Assyrian and Phœnician, not Egyptian influence, though the second commandment was directed against the multitude of idols and symbolical images in Egyptian temples, and especially against the worship of animals. In later times at least, without question, the idolatry followed by Israel was Assyrian and Babylonian: their worship of Sicuth and Chiun, mentioned by Amos,[6] being that of the Assyrian gods Sakkoth and Kewan, the planet Saturn.

Ezekiel, indeed, tells us that, while they were still on the Nile, God had demanded that they should not defile themselves any longer with the idols of Egypt, and had required every man to "cast away the abominations of his eyes;" the household gods to which he did reverence.[7] But these may either have been Egyptian or Asiatic. It seems implied, however, in Leviticus, by the stern command, "to

[1] Ezek. xx. 26. [2] Lev. xvi. 22.
[3] Exod. xiii. 13; xxxiv. 20. [4] Deut. xxiii. 18.
[5] Lengerke's *Kenaan*, pp. 376-8. See Mövers' *Phœniz.*, vol. i. pp. 363, 371. Prof. Sayce holds that Asherah the goddess of fertility was quite distinct from Ashtoreth, or Astarte—the Assyrian Istar. *The Bible and the Monuments*, p. 72.
[6] Amos v. 26. See vol. i. p. 60. [7] Ezek. xx. 7, 8; xxiii. 3, 8.

offer no more sacrifices to goats,"[1] that, in some cases, at least, they copied the native idolatry of the Nile, if, indeed, the reference be not to the goat-like demons or satyrs supposed to haunt the desert.[2]

The incidents of the struggle with Pharaoh; of the march to Sinai; and of the giving of the law; had been designed to substitute, for such idolatry, faith in Jehovah, as the invisible but all-powerful Leader of Israel, and the one only living and true God. But it was natural that among a people so accustomed to idols, and in an age when the sight of the Deity was held absolutely essential by mankind at large, there should be a craving for some visible symbol even in the worship of Jehovah. This had been already indulgently met, by the presence of the cloudy and fiery pillar before the host, and by the overpowering spectacles of the Holy Mount. It was further, presently, commanded that, as an additional emblem of the presence of God amongst the people, a perpetual fire should burn in the Tabernacle which was to be constructed. But the total proscription of such images and symbols as they had seen on every hand in Egypt, was too sublime an advance in religious ideas to be accepted or understood at once. Nor must we judge such a nation too hardly, when we remember that, even at this day, Eastern Christendom has its sacred pictures, and the Western Church its images, as aids to devotion. It is difficult, even after so many ages, for civilized, as for uncivilized, races, to banish everything human and sensuous from their conception of an invisible God. The Hebrews, who till a few weeks before had worshipped Apis or Mnevis, the ox-gods of Egypt—or Moloch, the ox-god of Canaan—must have found it still harder to trust in an unseen Being, and

[1] Lev. xvii. 7; xviii. 23. See p. 81. [2] See same word, Isa. xxxiv. 11-15, 21.

doubtless were inclined to think Moses such an incarnate divinity as they had been accustomed to consider the kings and priests of Egypt. But since their arrival at Sinai he had not continued with them as before. After the first few days he had been summoned to the Mount, and had now remained there more than a month, till it seemed to some in the camp, in spite of the cloud of the Presence on the heights above them, as if he had forsaken them, or had perished among the lightnings and thunders. Helpless and lost in the absence of a leader, they demanded that Aaron should make a god for them, like those they had known in Egypt, to be, in their eyes, the God who had brought them out from that land, and to go before them, instead of Moses. They had no thought, apparently, of worshipping any other being than Jehovah, but wished to do so under the form of a familiar idol;[1] and that within a few days after the command had sounded to them from the Mount, forbidding all such "similitudes."

BRONZE FIGURE OF APIS.—*Wilkinson.*

The sacred ox—Apis—of Memphis, which lay near the Arab city of Cairo, was one of the greatest of Egyptian gods, the incarnation of Osiris, and his most cherished emblem as the patron of agriculture.[2] It was, indeed, worshipped under three names, at different places, as Apis, Basis, and the black calf Mnevis, whose shrine was at On, almost in

[1] Exod. xxxii. 4. Aaron says, "*This is thy God*," etc. (lit.).
[2] Plut., *De Is.*, 74. Warburton's *Divine Legation*, vol. iv. pp. 3, 5, 7.

the midst of the Hebrew population. But of these three, Apis was the most famous. A calf, affirmed by the priests to show the mysterious markings which proved its divine birth, was brought on a sacred ship to Memphis, with great pomp, and conducted to a splendid palace-temple, where extensive courts and shady walks were provided for his pleasure, and hosts of menials attended to wait on him. He was allowed to drink only from one special well, and his food was as carefully chosen as if he had been really divine. Oxen were sacrificed to him,[1] and he received the constant adoration of multitudes who came to worship or to consult him as an oracle. His answers, indeed, must have been distressingly uncertain, for they seem to have been determined by the readiness with which he took food from the hand of the inquirer; from the particular door by which he entered his gorgeous stable; and by other indications of a class no higher. His magnificent tomb has already been described,[2] but his death was an event which eclipsed the gaiety of all Egypt. Every one shaved his head, and gave way to lamentations, which continued till a new Apis was found, and then the rejoicing was as universal. As with other gods, high festivals were held yearly in his honour; his birthday, especially, being a great national holiday, celebrated with sacrifices, feasting, and religious dances, but also with foul license and vice. Herodotus describes some of these religious saturnalia, from which the characteristics of the feast of Apis may be judged. Women played on castanets, men on flutes; the multitude singing and clapping their hands together to the music. Lascivious dances turned the precincts of the temple into a wide abomination, and wine, drunk to excess, heightened every other evil. Such festivals were indeed

[1] Herod., ii. 38, 41. [2] Page 18. For his "marks," see p. 83.

common. At that of Isis, men and women beat themselves after the sacrifice, like the flagellants of the middle ages, while the Carians, settled on the Nile,[1] cut their foreheads with knives.[2]

Of the local worship of Moloch, the ox-god of the Asiatic tribes of the Delta, we have no details, but no doubt it was similar to that of Apis or Mnevis, and the feasts in its honour would be equally licentious and revolting.

Deficient in the great qualities of a leader, which so pre-eminently marked his brother Moses, Aaron weakly listened to the clamours of the crowd, that he should provide for them an idol emblem of Jehovah. He may have withstood the demand till awed by fear of personal violence; for tradition assigns the death of Hur to his resistance to the proposal. Yet, as the results showed, only a small part of the

[1] Lev. xix. 28; xxi. 5. 1 Kings xviii. 26, 28. Jer. xvi. 6; xli. 5; xlvii. 5.

[2] Herod., ii. 60. Dances and music were usual at the religious festivals of the Jews. Exod. xv. 20. Judg. xxi. 2. 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7. 2 Sam. vi. 16. Dancing, as a religious act, dates indeed from the earliest ages, and prevails in some countries even at this day. In India, for example, dances before an idol are a feature of nearly every religious festival, and the dancing of Mohammedan dervishes is well known. Very possibly the idea is not unfounded which traces such rites to an imitation of the heavenly bodies. (Volney's *Voyage en Syrie*, vol. ii. p. 403, note.) Lucian unhesitatingly maintains this opinion. "Dancing," says he, "is no new custom, but dates from the beginning of all things; for the circling motions of the stars, and the movements among each other of the planets and fixed stars, and their well ordered harmony, explain its origin." Even Milton supposes such religious dances among the angels in heaven, before creation.

> "That day, as other solemn days, they spent
> In song and dance about the sacred hill;
> Mystical dance, which yonder starry sphere
> Of planets, and of fixed * in all her wheels,
> Resembles nearest: mazes intricate,
> Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular,
> Then most, when most irregular they seem;
> And in their motions harmony divine,
> So smooths her charming tones, that God's own ear
> Listens delighted." †

* Fixed = fixed stars.

† *Paradise Lost*, Bk. v. 618–627.

host were actually compromised in this religious defection,[1] and the whole movement might have been crushed in the bud, by manly firmness. Instead of this, however, he invited the men, with their wives, sons and daughters, to give him their golden ear-rings to melt into the image they desired. It was fitting to make it of such materials, for many of these ornaments, engraved with magic characters, and consecrated to some idol, were worn as amulets.[2] Thin plates of gold formed from these sufficed to coat over a wooden figure, of Moloch, Apis, or possibly of the calf Mnevis, the emblem of the Sun-god Horus; Aaron, or rather those appointed by him, engraving the necessary sacred marks on it,[3] and thus preparing it for worship by the multitude. There would be no difficulty in finding artificers for such work; carvers in wood and workers in metal no doubt abounded in the camp, slaves in Egypt being often taught, for their master's profit, the various arts and trades of the land.

That the golden calf was a copy of the sacred ox or calf of Egypt, has, till late years, been generally taken for granted. It is now, however, questioned, as has been noticed, whether it was not rather a reproduction of the god Moloch, worshipped by the Asiatics in the Delta. A common national origin, as well as numerous intermarriages, would make such an idol at once familiar and attractive to the Hebrews. They might be proud of their descent from Abraham, but they retained at all times a lingering attachment to the idolatry he left behind him at Haran. The teraphim in Jacob's household and camp were, indeed, only a first indication of a feeling that showed itself through all

[1] See the small number mentioned in Exod. xxxii. 28.

[2] Eichhorn's *Einleitung in das N. T.*, vol. i. p. 524. Winer, art. "Ohrringe."

[3] See page 82.

their history, to the downfall of their State. The names of the gods worshipped and the forms of idolatry might vary, but undoubtedly the bias to Babylonian and Canaanitish heathenism never died out. They were especially given to the worship of Moloch through their whole subsequent history. "There is no trace," says Bunsen, "of any Asiatic stem ever borrowing a religious solemnity from the Egyptians; for the idols of the Nile were an abomination to such races, when not an object of ridicule." He therefore thinks that the golden calf was an image, not of Apis, but of Moloch, who was worshipped under the shape of an ox, or as a human form with an ox's head.[1] He adds, that he himself met some chiefs of the Druses, in London, in 1842, who carried about with them a small gilded figure of an ox, in obedience, as they said, to an immemorial custom of their people.[2]

Tradition fixes the time of the Hebrew defection as in the month of Tammuz, our July,[3] which would correspond with that of the annual summer feast of ancient religions, especially the Semitic; the festival changed afterwards by Moses into the Feast of Tabernacles, all that was impure and idolatrous being excluded. A considerable interval must have passed before everything was prepared, but at last, six weeks[4] after his brother had gone up into the Mount, Aaron announced that the next day would be kept as a feast to Jehovah; the golden calf being recognized as in some way His symbol.

With the dawn of morning, matters came, finally, to a crisis. Burnt sacrifices and peace offerings having been

[1] Mövers, *Phöniz.*, vol. i. p. 372.

[2] Bunsen's *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. pp. 180-183. Ewald agrees with him that the calf was not an allusion to Egyptian but to Asiatic idolatry, as introduced to Egypt by the Hyksos. *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 258. Lengerke thinks it was Apis. *Kenaan*, p. 381. Sayce says, without hesitation, that it was Moloch. Lengerke died in 1855.

[3] Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. ii. p. 417. [4] Exod. xxiv. 28.

presented to the calf, the people sat down to feast on the parts of the victims not consumed on the altars; and, this being ended, gave themselves up to the wild license with which such occasions had been associated in Egypt. Meanwhile, no messenger had been sent to Moses to warn him of what was afoot; if indeed awe would have permitted any one to ascend the Mount. But now a Divine intimation apprised him of the danger, and he hurried down towards the camp. Presently as he and Joshua came nearer, and the noise of the feast reached them, it was supposed by Joshua, soldier-like, to be the sound of a hostile attack, such as that made by Amalek not long before. But Moses, true to his own instincts, interpreted it rightly, as neither the shout of victory nor the wail of the defeated, but the roll of wild choruses in a religious festival.

Once amongst the people, the influence of his strong will was seen in an instant. Passing straight to the idol, he ordered it to be instantly removed, and broke up the assembly by the mere awe of his presence.

The incident had been critical, for God had threatened to consume the whole multitude for such an apostasy, and had only spared them at the earnest and touching intercession of Moses. It was imperative that the evil be rooted out, as far as possible. The calf, itself, must first be utterly degraded from all suspicion of divine power, and was therefore ground to powder, and strewn on the stream of which the people had to drink. To kill a sacred animal was a terrible sacrilege, but to be forced to drink the ashes of a desecrated idol, was a still more impressive punishment, for the wate in which they were mingled became accursed, and to taste them brought with it the direst results.[1]

[1] As in Num. v. 21-27. The converse of this idea is seen in the fact that among

Yet, this was only the beginning of retribution. Though tender and loving as a woman ; willing indeed to be blotted out of the book of God,[1] if only the sin of his people might be forgiven; Moses had, on occasion, all the sterner attributes of a strong ruler of men. Authority had been overthrown in the vast host, for Aaron had let the people fall into wild lawlessness and insubordination,[2] which, if not at once crushed, would run riot in idolatry, and destroy the whole scheme of Theocracy at its rise. Standing in the gate of the camp, therefore, he summoned to him such as were on the side of Jehovah, and was forthwith answered by all the men of the tribe of Levi, the smallest of the twelve tribes.[3] These he instantly ordered to gird on their swords and, passing through the host, to put down the rebellion at any cost. Ere night, terror had seized the offenders, and the camp was saved, but not before 3,000 men had fallen.

Mohammedans at this day water in which has been steeped a bit of paper on which are a few words of the Koran is thought the most certain of all medical remedies.

[1] Exod. xxxii. 32.

[2] Exod. xxxii. 25. "The people were naked" — literally, "are not to be reined in." The rest of the verse may be read, "for Aaron had let go the reins unto them, for a whispering, or derision among their enemies" — *i.e.*, the worshippers of the true God would hereafter be taunted as the worshippers of a calf.

[3] Num. iii. 39 ; xxvi 62. 23,000 males from a month old, upwards, would perhaps imply 50,000 persons in all, in the tribe.

CHAPTER X.

STILL AT SINAI.

In its results, the apostasy of the golden calf affected the whole future history of Israel. It was an open and flagrant breach of the covenant so recently made with God, and for the time cancelled it. Even Moses felt this, and had shown that he did so, by throwing down and shattering the tablets inscribed with the "Ten Words" on which, primarily, all else rested—an act tantamount to throwing up his high commission as leader and prophet of the people. Since they had repudiated their relations to Jehovah, the laws which expressed those relations would only be dishonoured by being delivered to them. The narrative of Exodus discloses the gravity of the moment in language of mysterious sublimity. Moses, once more ascending Sinai, pleads with God for the pardon of Israel and of Aaron—praying that his own name may be blotted out from the book of heaven with theirs, if they be not forgiven. But all he can for a time obtain, is the promise that an angel would henceforth guide them to Canaan. Jehovah Himself was too offended to come near the camp, nor would it be well He should, lest His anger burst forth to their destruction.

That their God was no longer to dwell among them, as of old, struck the hearts of all with a profound grief, which expressed itself in the striking form of a universal public mourning. Every ornament was laid aside, and the sombre

dress of general humiliation and penitence adopted. Nor was this merely for a time. Henceforth, the hope of restored favour was connected with the retention of this visible confession of guilt till they had finally entered Canaan.[1] There were, also, other marks of the breach between God and His people. The tent of Moses, which had hitherto, apparently, been the temporary sanctuary of the camp, marked by the mysterious cloud at its entrance, was removed to a distance; as if the symbol of the Divine Presence could no longer be vouchsafed among the apostate multitude. There, aloof from the guilty host, the mysterious pledge of His not having wholly forsaken Israel still hung—but it was not, as before, in their midst. All who "sought Jehovah" had now to go outside the camp, and thither, also, Moses had to betake himself for Divine communications. The awe felt towards him had returned with greater force than ever after his re-appearance, and his future relations with Jehovah intensified it still more. "When he used to go out to the Tent of Meeting,"[2] says the sacred narrative, "every man was wont to stand in the entrance of his tent, looking after him till he went in, and the cloudy pillar then came down and rested at the entrance of the tent, while Jehovah talked with Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And all the people, each time they saw it, fell on their faces at the entrance of their tents."[3] But, as yet, there was no priestly or Levite guard over the sacred dwelling, for, when Moses returned to the camp, it was left in charge of Joshua.[4]

[1] Exod. xxxiii. 4-6.

[2] The tent where Jehovah met with Moses.

[3] Exod. xxxiii. 7-11. All these verses speak of events happening often. When Israel is spoken of as a stiff-necked people, it means, a people who in their haughty self will throw back their necks, as if in defiance.

[4] Exod. xxxiii. 11.

Forty days elapsed after the great catastrophe, before the prayer of Moses received a full answer, and then, at last, the life of Aaron was spared, and Jehovah once more promised, Himself, to go before Israel to Canaan.[1] This was equivalent to a renewal of the covenant, and a re-appointment of Moses to his great commission. He therefore, forthwith, resumed his old position. But, as at the burning bush he had craved some sign of the Divine favour, and some pledge of help, he now, with the yearning so peculiar to antiquity for a vision of the Godhead, asks that his re-installation might be similarly accredited,[2] and this petition also was granted. Placed in a crevice of Sinai, the majesty of Jehovah passed by, and a voice was heard proclaiming His presence and attributes. A new period in the career of the great prophet dates from this time.[3] Two other tables, hewn from the mountain side, and inscribed afresh with the "Ten Words," marked publicly the renewal of the covenant. Once more he remained forty days in the mountain, but this time the camp stood the test of his absence, and there was no sign of defection. Descending at last with the pledge of restored favour with God, it became evident that he stood on a loftier elevation above his countrymen than before, and was surrounded by an awful and mysterious greatness. A supernatural light, caught from near approach to the glory of Jehovah, shone from his features[4] and required to be hidden by a veil till it gradually faded, and it was noticed that

[1] The pleading of Moses with God for Israel is unspeakably touching, and so also is the language ascribed to Jehovah: "Must then *My* presence go with Thee: will nothing less suffice, that I may give thee rest?" Exod. xxxiii. 14, Ewald's translation.

[2] Exod. xxxiii. 18. [3] Exod. xxxiv. 29.

[4] The Hebrew word *karan*, to shine, is connected with *keren*, a horn, and hence, in the Vulgate, Moses is represented as having horns after his return from the Divine presence. This is the origin of the fancy which depicts him, as in the great statue by Michael Angelo, with horns.

this splendour was renewed as often as he returned to the camp from communion with God.[1]

The covenant having been thus re-established, it was now possible to prepare a more formal sanctuary than the tent of Moses. It was fitting that a centre should be provided to which all might turn as to the visible abode of Jehovah, the God-King of Israel. Accustomed to see images of the gods present among other peoples, they craved some equivalent, and were graciously heard. Though symbols of Jehovah were proscribed, they would have among them the mysterious cloud which attested His presence, and could thus boast far higher honour than any other nation.[2]

How "the pattern" of the future Tabernacle was revealed to Moses is not told us: we only learn that he was guided in its construction by monitions from God. It may be, as Dean Plumptre puts it, that "the lower analogies of the painter and the architect, seeing with their inward eye their completed work, before the work itself begins, may help us to understand how it was that the vision on the Mount included all details of form, measurement, materials, the order of the ritual, and the apparel of the priests."[3] The case of David, who tells us that the smallest particulars respecting the Temple were included in the things which "the Lord made him understand in writing, by His hand upon him," that is, by an inward illumination which seemed to exclude the slow process of deliberation and decision, furnishes a parallel to that of Moses.[4] But if thus mysteri-

[1] Exod. xxxiv. 4–35. Deut. x. 3–5, 10. Comp. 2 Cor. iii. 7 ff.

[2] In antiquity the desire for a visible presence of the deity was not only a great cause of the multiplication of idols, but showed itself in the passionate enthusiasm with which the household gods were kissed, watched, and protected. For any one to lose his gods was to lose all pledge of security or welfare. It was natural, therefore, for Israel to wish earnestly that God might be present, by some symbol, amongst them.

[3] Art. "Tabernacle," *Dict. of the Bible.* [4] *Ibid.*

ously planned, its execution was left to human instruments, among whom the names of only two survive—Bezaleel, "in the shadow of God," *i.e.*, under His protection, of the tribe of Judah: and Aholiab, "the father's tent," of the tribe of Dan—both having doubtless gained their artistic skill in Egypt.

The Tabernacle, as its name implies, was a movable tent-temple, suited to the requirements of an unsettled and wandering people. It was, hence, necessarily small—its length being only about 45 feet, and its breadth 15, which was also its height.[1] Its sides and western end, for it was open at the east, were formed of boards of acacia wood,[2] the only timber in the Sinai region suitable in its size and qualities. These boards were fixed in wooden sockets covered with silver: a plating of gold over both sides, and also over a series of acacia pillars and connecting bars, by which the structure was made firm, lending further dignity to it; though the splendour thus lavished was hidden beneath a succession of coverings which constituted the roof, and extended down the sides and end, nearly, if not quite, to the ground.

The description of these given by Josephus[3] throws a striking light on the condition of the Hebrews as a whole, for they show that numbers must have had the finest art-culture of Egypt, to enable them to produce such work. A veil of ten cubits every way, he tells us, hung over the pillars plated with gold which divided the interior of the Tabernacle into Holy and Most Holy, and made this specially sacred

[1] The cubit is reckoned = 18 in. here and in the following pages. Conder makes it = 16 in.

[2] Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 391. The tree is the *Acacia Seyal*. Its seed has a pod like that of the laburnum: its bark is used for tanning: camels browse on its terrible thorns, and it yields the gum arabic of commerce. Acacia wood was largely used for ship-building in antiquity, from its toughness and durability. Ritter's *Erdkunde*, vol. xiv. p. 335.

[3] Jos., *Ant.*, III. vi. 11.

portion invisible. On it, he says, were embroidered all sorts of flowers, and ornaments of many kinds, the forms of animals only excepted. Another veil hung over the five pillars at the entrance, and formed, as it were, a door. Besides these there were ten other curtains, four cubits broad and twenty-eight long, spread as a roof and as walls, coming to within a cubit of the ground. Others, thirty cubits long, were woven of hair as fine as wool, covering the tent and reaching to the earth. Over these again were other curtains of skins, the animal from which they were taken seeming to have been the tahash, a kind of seal found even now in the Red Sea. This description differs, however, from that of Exodus, which informs us that the innermost covering, which virtually constituted the Tabernacle, was made of ten great curtains of "fine twined linen," each twenty-eight cubits long by four broad: their surface embroidered with figures of cherubim, worked in threads of violet-purple, red-purple, and crimson, by skilled men, and thus forming a series of gorgeous tapestries covered with these mysterious forms. The Egyptians were believed to have invented woven stuffs and were famous for their looms, often making on them triumphs of art, rich in figures of natural or imaginary objects. It was natural, therefore, that famous workers in tapestry should be found among the Hebrews. The second covering was of eleven curtains of goats' hair, thirty cubits long and four broad. The third covering was formed, as already said, of the skins of the tahash.

Figures of cherubim were also worked with the same gorgeousness of colour on the veil which separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place, and the forms thus alone permitted in the Sacred Tent appear subsequently on the inner walls of the Temple, on the doors, and on the sup-

ports of the great lavers, being accepted as emblems of the descent of God to the awful spot and His presence in it: cherubim being associated with His manifestations in the heavens. The conception of such beings was easy to the Hebrews from the traditions of the mystic beings known by the same name, at the doors of palaces and temples on the Euphrates, from which their forefathers came, and they must have been no less familiar to the Phœnicians of Palestine and of the Egyptian Delta, for the religious ideas of Mesopotamia had very early passed to all the nations of Western Asia and to the related communities on the Nile. Over the inside coverings was one, of "rams'" leather, dyed red, and over this, as has been said, was placed a fourth of the skin of the dugong, a kind of seal, found still in the Red Sea, and known to the Hebrews as the tahash.[1] The leather made from this material is even at present used for sandals and shields in the Sinai Peninsula, and was anciently in demand for the winter tents of soldiers, from being impervious to water, and as a fancied protection from lightning.[2]

The interior was divided into two chambers, the eastern, forming the Holy Place, thirty feet long by fifteen broad; the inner, or Holy of Holies, only fifteen feet square. Like the corresponding space, bearing the same name, in Egyptian temples, this specially sacred spot was at the west end, and was wholly unlighted; for a double curtain of the finest

[1] The Hebrew word, Tahash, is no doubt the equivalent for the Arabic "Tuhash," which is a general name for the various species of seals, dugongs, and dolphins found in the Red Sea. Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*, p. 44.

[2] Palmer's *Sinai*, p. 39. Knobel's *Genesis*, p. 261. The use of the acacia wood and of tahash skin in the construction of the Tabernacle are striking "undesigned coincidences" in proof of the strict historical truth of the narrative. Both are local productions, unknown elsewhere. Eichhorn, *Einleitung*, vol. iii. p. 266. Furrer's *Geographie*, p. 11. The custom of dyeing rams' skins red still continues. Irby and Mangles, p. 258.

workmanship, bright, like that on the inner walls, with many colours, and adorned with strange forms, like the curtains of golden tissue before the Holy of Holies of an Egyptian temple, at once divided it from the Holy Place, and veiled it in permanent darkness. There was no shrine, however, such as I have seen in the great temples at Emeh and Denderah, great monoliths hewn into a dark recess, closed by a stone door, apparently for the secret resting-place of the god, in awful seclusion.

The sacred tent was enclosed in an open space 75 feet broad and 150 feet long. Of this, the eastern end, or entrance, was closed by hangings of costly workmanship, though not of the same exceptional fineness as that of the inner curtains;[1] the pillars supporting them being plated with copper, except on the cornices, which were covered with gold. The connecting bars above, however, were gilded throughout, and the hangings themselves were held up by golden hooks, though the sockets of the pillars were only of copper. That the entrance was at the east, and thus faced the west, was in keeping with the usual practice of the age in sacred structures.[2]

On the other three sides, a series of pillars and bars, strengthened and ornamented with silver and copper, formed a framework from which hung a line of curtains, depending from silver rods. But their height was only 7½ feet, while the Tabernacle within was 15 feet.

The sacred equipment of this sanctuary was inevitably, in some respects, similar to that of heathen temples, though in vivid contrast to them by the absence of any idolatrous symbols. In His wisdom, God here, as elsewhere, sanctioned the use of existing forms and ideas, as already familiar and

[1] Exod. xxvii. 16. [2] Rosenmüller, *Bib. Alterth.*, I. i. 137.

easily understood, but separated from them all that might lead to error.

It is very interesting, however, to notice the resemblances between the Mosaic institutions and those of other religions. In Ancient Babylonia and Assyria there were festivals and fasts with prescribed rites and sacrifices for each; they had "peace" offerings and "heave" offerings; they dedicated their first-born to the gods; they had sin offerings, and they distinguished between the meal offerings and animal sacrifices. They had clean and unclean food; the unclean, which was forbidden, including the flesh of swine and "creeping things." They had high priests and others of a lower order; "seas" like those of Solomon's laver, for priests and worshippers to wash in before approaching the god; temples resembling the Tabernacle and the Temple of Jerusalem, with a Holy of Holies concealed by a veil, from profane eyes, where the god at times seated himself. There were two altars and a table of shewbread, and, inside the shrine, a coffer containing two written tablets. The coffer was the ark or "ship" of the god, and was carried in religious processions. The coffer of the little Temple of Imgur Bel, fashioned like a ship, and thus pointing back to a hoary antiquity, when the first worshippers who made use of these coffers dwelt by the seashore, as did the old Chaldæan inhabitants of the city of Eridu, on the shores of the Persian Gulf, from which the primitive Babylonians derived their religion, gives us a fair idea of what the Israelitish Ark of the Covenant must have been like. These ships filled an important part in the Babylonian ritual. A hymn, for example, dating from the distant ages, when the form of an ark had not yet superseded the primitive form of a ship, describes the sacred ship or ark of Merodach:

Its helm is of cedar . . .
Its serpent-like oar has a handle of gold—
Its mast is painted with turquoise.
Seven times seven lions of Eden (the field) fill its deck,
The god Adar fills its cabin, built within.
Its side is of cedar from the forest.
Its awning is the palm tree of Diloim,
Carrying away its heart is the Canal,
Making glad its heart is the Sunrise.
Its house, its ascent, is a mountain that gives rest to the heart.
The Ship of Ea is Destiny.
Nurgal, the princess, is the goddess whose word is life.
Merodach is the god who pronounces the good names.
The goddess who does the house good, the messenger of Ea the ruler of the earth, even Naugar—the lady of work—the bright one, the mighty workman of heaven, with pure and blissful hand, has uttered the word of life!
May the ship before thee cross the canal!
May the ship behind thee sail over its mouth!
Within thee, may the heart, rejoicing, make holiday!

Sacred arks, however, were not peculiar to Babylonia, but were used by the Phœnicians, among whom we find them mentioned sixteen hundred years before Christ, and the Hebrews had seen them in every temple in Egypt[1] as shrines of the gods, and indeed their use continued to later times, as in the case of that of the Temple of Artemis, at Patræ, in Achaia, which contained the image of Dionysus, veiled from sight in reverent secrecy; or of that of the Temple of Hera, at Olympia, in which were kept several idols, and some sacred books, as in that of Israel.[2] Such an ark was commanded by God to be prepared and placed in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle, as the symbol of His having taken possession of it as His peculiar dwelling-place. It was to be of acacia wood, the material least liable to decay, of any

[1] They were common also to the Assyrians, Babylonians, Etruscans, Trojans, and Greeks.

[2] Bähr's *Symbolik*, vol. i. p. 399.

available. In size it was only small, for it measured no more than 3 feet 9 inches in length, and 2 feet 3 inches in width and depth. Without and within, it was overlaid with the purest gold; a moulding of the same material running along its upper edges, to receive a golden covering known as the Mercy Seat. This, also, was made of beaten gold, with two cherubim, apparently of human form, rising, one from each end, with outspread wings, and bending towards the centre; for images were not proscribed altogether by Moses, except as symbols of religious worship. Rings of pure gold in its four corners, or "feet," received staves similarly plated, and these were never to be removed, lest in taking them out the priests might touch the sacred chest itself,[1] which was thus rectangular like the sacred ark of Babylonia, and was like it also in the mode by which it was carried about, for the Babylonian ark was borne by means of staves passed through rings at its four corners. The sacredness of the Tabernacle culminated in this supreme symbol of the presence of God; for it was from between the cherubim,[2] as the mystic supporters of His throne and its unsleeping guardians,[3] that He made known His will to Moses, and accepted the atonement made once a year for the sins of the people, when the high priest entered, at this long interval, to sprinkle the mercy seat with the blood of the appointed propitiation.

Inside the Ark, however, there was no idol, to be borne about on high festivals, and shown to the people, as in heathen religions; but in its stead only the two Tables of

[1] Num. iv. 15.

[2] God is often spoken of as "dwelling between the cherubim" (Ps. lxxx. 1; xcix. 1). See, also, Exod. xxv. 22. Elsewhere they bear the throne of God (2 Sam. xxii. 11. Ps. xviii. 10. Ezek. ix. 3; x. 4, 18). In the last verse it is said "the glory stood over the cherubim."

[3] Bähr's *Symbolik*, vol. i. p. 377.

the Commandments, spoken from Sinai, and the Book of the Covenant, made by Jehovah with Israel: the fitting emblems of the true religion.[1]

Egyptian Priests bearing the Shrine of a God.

In the Holy Place, next the Holy of Holies, stood the Table of Shewbread on the north side, the altar of incense in the middle, and the sacred seven-branched lamp on the south. Of these, the Table of Shewbread, or rather, "Bread of the Presence," was of acacia wood, 3 feet long, 18 inches broad, and 2 feet 3 inches high, plated with pure gold, and strengthened and ornamented with a framework a handbreadth deep, also covered with gold; on which the top rested. Two staves plated with gold, and passed through four golden rings at the corners, supplied the means of carrying it when needed. On this table the priests were to place twelve cakes, in two rows, each Sabbath, strewing incense over them,[2] as a sign that prayer and thanks were ever becoming; removing them at the close of each week, and replacing them by others; those removed becoming forthwith a priestly perquisite, to be eaten in the Holy Place. The absolute dependence of Israel, alike in its tribes and as a whole, and of man as a race, on God, for daily bread, could receive no more fitting acknowledgment;

[1] The pot of manna and Aaron's rod were added afterwards.
[2] Lev. xxiv. 7.

for the Bread of the Presence remained before Him perpetually. Besides the table itself, however, there were different vessels connected with its object; a large golden basin in which the sacred bread was brought into the Holy Place, and for holding the fine meal of offerings; pans or dishes for incense: a large flagon for the wine of drink offerings; cups or chalices from which the wine was poured on the altar;[1] and small shovels on which to carry the incense, weekly, from the table to the altar of burnt offering. Such a table was regarded in antiquity, generally, as a necessary part of the furniture of a temple, as in that of Belus at Babylon, where a table with flagons, incense bowls, and other sacred vessels[2] stood beside the image of the god.

The sacred lamp was placed fittingly in the south, the peculiar region of the sun. Its shape was doubtless similar to that in the later Temple, of which a likeness remains on the Arch of Titus: three branches bending upwards on each side from a massy stalk, and forming a straight line of six lampholders, increased to seven by a central shaft. The whole, with the lamps themselves, and the very snuffers and snuff-dishes, were elaborately wrought of pure beaten gold. Shut in by thick curtains, the Holy Place, like the Holy of Holies, had no light, and hence, to dissipate the gloom, and also to serve as a symbol that He who guarded Israel neither slumbered nor slept, all the lamps were never extinguished at one time, but shed a perpetual light in the sacred chamber.[3]

The Altar of Incense,[4] which was only 18 inches square and 3 feet high, was overlaid with pure gold on the top and

[1] Exod. xxv. 29. Lev. xxiv. 5-10. [2] Herod., i. 181, 183. Diod., ii. 9.

[3] Ewald thinks the central lamp holder, as a symbol of the Sabbath, rose higher than the others. *Alterthümer*, p. 435.

[4] Exod. xxx. 1-6.

the sides, and ornamented with a raised moulding, also of gold. Four horns, covered also with rich gold, rose at the corners, and golden rings on the sides provided for its being borne by two staves plated with gold. Incense was burned in this every morning when the lamps were trimmed, and every evening when the whole were kindled, and its horns were once a year touched with the blood of the sin offering of atonement. The fire on it, moreover, was never allowed to go out, that that on the great brazen altar might always be kindled from it, or from the perpetually burning lamp.[1]

The Altar of Burnt Offerings stood in the outer court. It measured 7½ feet in length and breadth, and was 4½ feet high, and proportionately large, with horns at the corners, like those of the altar of incense, as emblems of the supplications of the offerer, rising like flame heavenwards. As such they were sprinkled ever anew with the blood of atonement, and when grasped by trembling fugitives from vengeance were a sanctuary, inviolable except in a few cases.[2] Its acacia frame-was overlaid with copper, and ornamental work of the same metal rose two feet from the ground, all round, to keep the feet or clothes of the officiating priests from touching it. Copper, indeed, throughout, even to the rings and plated staves, was the only metal used. The hollow interior was apparently filled with earth, smoothed on the top like a hearth. Pails for carrying away the ashes, and the residuum of the offerings; shovels for lifting them; vessels for sprinkling the blood; forks for taking up the pieces of the sacrifices, and pans for the charcoal of the fires; all of copper, constituted its furniture. Such brazen altars, with similar horns, were common in antiquity, as, for ex-

[1] Köhler, *Lehrbuch der Bib. Geschichte*, p. 370. Ewald's *Alterthümer*, p. 437.
[2] 1 Kings i. 50; ii. 28.

ample, the great brazen altar before the temple of the Syrian goddess at Hierapolis, in Syria.[1]

A huge Brazen Laver, rising from a stand, the whole made from copper mirrors given for the purpose by the women,[2] formed the only other object of large size in the forecourt, and provided the indispensable means for the many ceremonial washings of hands and feet required by the priests, during their ministrations.

All the materials for this national sanctuary were supplied by the free offerings of the people. Nor is it at all wonderful that, though so costly or varied, they should have been procurable even at Sinai; for there were Hebrew families of various ranks,[3] and, as a whole, the people had brought away much from Egypt, at the Exodus. Moreover, the whole quantity of any one thing required was not great, for the plates of gold, or silver, or copper, may have been very thin, and the cotton or linen for the finer or coarser curtains, was not much to come from a whole nation. That the various artificers required should have been found in the camp, is not at all surprising, for Egypt excelled in every art needed for the Tabernacle, and not a few Hebrews, as already said, had doubtless acquired them while there. How easily could the weaving of the curtains, for example, have been learned from a people who could manufacture the famous quilted coat of mail sent by Amasis to Rhodes, of which every thread was made up of 360 strands.[4]

The "Tabernacle," thus designed, took only seven months to prepare; so zealous were the penitent multitude to atone for their sin at Horeb. At last, on the first day of the second year from the Exodus, it was formally erected

[1] Lucian, *De Syr. Dea*, 39. [2] Exod. xxxviii. 8.
[3] 1 Chron. iv. 18. A Jew in Egypt is said to have married a daughter of Pharaoh.
[4] Herod., iii. 47.

in the midst of the camp, the Cloud of the Presence forthwith descending on it; a pledge of its acceptance by Jehovah as His dwelling-place among them.

But the departure from the patriarchal constitution, hitherto prevailing, implied by the new sanctuary, necessitated still further changes. There had, till now, been no special class set apart for religious duties, though there had never been wanting those who performed all needed rites for the people. Thus, before the Law was given, we read of "priests who came near unto the Lord,"[1] for the individual Hebrew family had acted from the earliest times as a unit complete in itself, each with its own priest. Firstborn sons apparently had held the office—the "young men who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto Jehovah," at Sinai.[2] Nor did this old custom soon die out, for we find "a young man" of "the family of Judah," acting as a Levite in Micah's household at Mount Ephraim, more than fifty years after Moses.[3] Even centuries later, indeed, the sons of David were at least titular priests,[4] and David himself wore the specially priestly ephod when he brought the ark to Zion,[5] while Solomon acted and was honoured as a priest on the most solemn occasions.[6]

The institution of a hereditary priesthood was thus an invasion of ancient customs such as only a crisis like that of the apostasy made possible. Israel gloried in being a "nation of priests," from their peculiar privileges of approach to God. The higher spiritual gifts moreover be-

[1] Exod. xix. 22. [2] Exod. xxiv. 5. [3] Judg. xvii. 7–13; xviii. 3.

[4] 2 Sam. viii. 18. "Chief rulers" = priests. The title may be merely one of honour; but there is no ground for thinking it excludes the priestly dignity. See also 2 Sam. xx. 26. 1 Kings iv. 5: "Chief ruler" and "principal officer" = priest.

[5] 2 Sam. vi. 14.

[6] 1 Kings viii. 62 ff. See Ewald's *Alterthümer*.

stowed on many members of the community—raising them to the dignity of prophets or representatives of God—made the whole race, in a sense, "holy." But a system of priestly rites and laws was now to be established which could not be intrusted to the simple arrangements of former times, and, indeed, could not be duly executed except by a body of men specially set apart and prepared. How far it had been at first designed by God to introduce the Levitical worship, with its lengthened detail of ceremony, and its varied offerings and sacrifices, cannot be known. Yet it is striking to find Jeremiah saying, in the name of God: "I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people; and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you."[1] The inferiority of the merely ritual and ceremonial system to the spiritual seems, indeed, to be expressly stated by Ezekiel, and to be regarded by him as a needful condescension to the tendencies of the people. "Therefore I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live."[2]

The fidelity of the tribe of Levi, amidst the defection of the calf-worship, seems to have determined its being chosen for the honours of the hereditary priesthood now to be introduced. Moses had indeed implied this in the words with which he launched them forth against their brethren: "Fill your hand to-day (with a gift) to Jehovah; consecrate yourselves to His service; if you have to turn against even son or brother, spare them not. Your fidelity will bring down

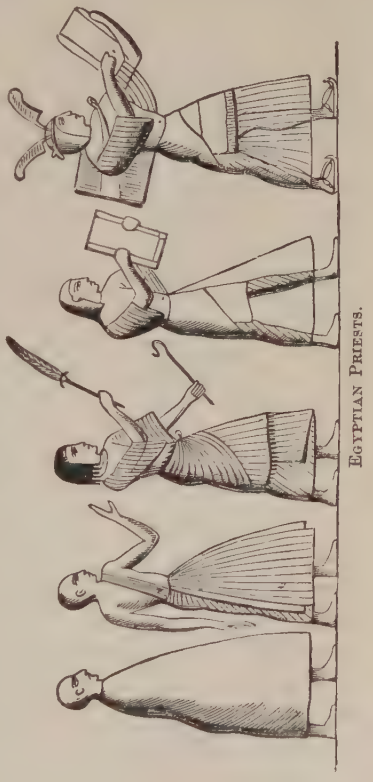
[1] Jer. vii. 22, 23; see also Amos v. 25. [2] Ezek. xx. 25.

a blessing on you. Henceforward you shall be devoted for ever to Him alone."[1] A beautiful legend as to the choice of Levi for the honour of the priesthood must not be overlooked. "When Jacob," say the Rabbis, "fled from his father's house to Mesopotamia, and a Divine vision had promised him a splendid future, he vowed that, if the Almighty would protect him, keep him from sinful deeds, and restore him in peace to his home, he would consecrate a tenth of all that he had to God. Returning from Syria rich in goods and herds, the pious father, true to his vow, separated the tenth of all he possessed, to a holy end. But the angel who appeared to him at Mahanaim, asked him, Thinkest thou, Jacob, that thou hast quite fulfilled thy vow? Know that the Lord claims not mere worldly gifts alone! Thou hast more than ten sons, and thou hast not yet tithed them to God. Wishest thou not to consecrate one of them to His service? And Jacob forthwith did as the angel counselled. Counting from Benjamin,

EGYPTIAN PRIESTS.

[1] Exod. xxxii. 29. See Keil and Delitzsch. Knobel. Hess, *Geschichte Moses*, vol. i. p. 308.

Levi was the tenth, and on him fell the lot, to be holy to the Eternal, and therefore was he chosen to the priesthood."[1] But the historical grounds for the selection are a more trustworthy explanation.



Egyptian Priests.

As was befitting, a special dress was appointed for the priestly class thus appointed. It consisted of a pair of short white linen drawers, reaching from the loins to the middle of the thigh,[2] and a cassock of diamond or chess-board pattern[3] of the same material, woven in one piece throughout, which came nearly to the feet, and was secured round the waist by a white linen girdle, embroidered with flowers in blue, purple, and red. These, with a round turban, like the cup of a flower, completed a costume sufficient for a hot climate. This dress, however, was only worn during the performance of duty; that of the people generally being apparently substituted at other times. No one was allowed to sleep in it,

[1] Beers' *Leben Mosis*, p. 27.
[2] Jos., *Ant.*, III. vii. 1. Exod. xxviii. 40–42. Lev. viii. 13.
[3] Bähr's *Symbol.*, vol. ii. c. 3, § 2. Leyrer in Herzog, vol. vii. p. 714.

and when it was soiled it was never washed, but torn up to make wicks for the sacred lamps. The sanctity of a holy place in the East, which had required Moses to take off his sandals at the burning bush, found a similar expression in the case of the priests, who were required to minister barefoot; and this they tenaciously did, though it not only drew ridicule on them from the heathen,[1] but often seriously affected their health.[2]

In addition to the dress of his humbler brethren, the high priest wore, over the usual cassock, an upper sleeveless robe of purple-blue, woven in one piece, elaborately fringed at the neck, and ornamented round the skirt, which almost reached the feet, with alternate golden bells, and pomegranates of blue, purple, and crimson. Above this came the ephod, a shorter tunic, with slits for the arms, like the robe beneath; the back and front being connected by shoulder pieces of broad golden embroidery, in which were inserted two large onyx stones engraved with the names of the twelve tribes—to mark the representative character of their wearer. Over this ephod, suspended by blue cords from golden rings, hung a breastplate of the same rich materials as the shoulder pieces, folded into a square pocket of a span in size each way. On this flashed twelve precious stones set in gold, in three rows, and engraved, like the shoulder jewels, with the names of the tribes. With this ornament were associated, in some way, the mysterious "Urim" and "Thummim," in connection with which the Divine will was made known through the high priest, in his official capacity. What the words really mean is, however, very uncertain. They have

[1] Juv., *Sat.*, vi. 159. Ugolini, vol. viii. p. 976; vol. xiii. p. 405.

[2] The Egyptian priests also were barefooted at their ministrations, and Mohammedans compromise matters by putting on slippers on entering their mosques. Rosenmüller's *Scholia in Vet. Test.*, vol. i. p. 412.

been supposed to refer to something analogous to an ornament worn by the president of the High Court of Justice in Egypt, who was necessarily a priest—a small figure, composed of costly stones, which was called Truth—forming perhaps an image of the goddess Tme, whose name has been supposed by some identical with "Thummim,"[1] though many Egyptian scholars reject this derivation. It would seem, however, as if the translators of the Greek Bible had been of this opinion, as "Thummim" is always rendered "Truth" by them. So, also, "Urim" is thought traceable to the Egyptian word for "revelation." Hence it has been suggested that the Urim and Thummim may have been two small images—kept in the pocket of the breastplate, or hung in front of it—representing "revelation" and "truth," which in some way gave oracular answers when consulted. That there were figures of cherubim in the Holy of Holies is thought to vindicate them from want of harmony with the Mosaic system; but, unfortunately, no details are given by which to test this explanation.[2] Josephus imagines that the precious stones on the breastplate were themselves the Urim and Thummim, and the Rabbis add, that they flashed

Egyptian High Priest.

[1] Ebers gives the name of the goddess as Ma. She had closed eyes, and wore an ostrich feather on her head. The amulet called Ma was set with precious stones. *Eine Ægypt. Königstochter*, vol. i. p. 219.

[2] Diestel, in Herzog, vol. xvi. pp. 742-749. Knobel, *Exodus*, on chap. xxviii. 30. Ewald, *Alterthümer*, pp. 333-388.

mysterious answers when interrogated. But it seems more in keeping with Scripture to regard the names as indicating an ornament unconnected with revelations from God, except in so far as these were only given through the high priest when he was clothed in all the insignia of his office—the breastplate and its associated emblems included.[1] It is a curious fact that the Urim and Thummim, and also private ephods, which were something of the same kind, are not mentioned after David's time.

The head-dress of the high priest consisted of the common turban of the priest wound round with white linen,[2] and bearing in front, fastened by blue ribbons, a plate of pure gold, on which were the words "Holiness to Jehovah." In other respects his garments were the same as those of other priests—the diaper-patterned cassock, the linen girdle, and the linen drawers.

The dignity of the priesthood was limited to the direct descendants of Aaron, the rest of the tribe of Levi being restricted to the humbler duties connected with religious ministrations. To them was intrusted the charge of the Tabernacle and its furniture, on the march, and its erection and defence when the camp was stationary. They had,

[1] M. Lenormant has found allusions in the Assyrian tablets to a gem in a royal or priestly ring, the flashes from which were regarded as oracular. This, he fancies, may explain the nature of the Urim and Thummim. That these were in the pocket of the high priest's breastplate not outside proves, he thinks, conclusively, that they could not, as Josephus imagines, be any of the gems in front of that ornament. That the Urim—"light"—is more frequently mentioned in Scripture than the Thummim—"truth"—seems to him to support the theory that flashes of light constituted the oracle. *La Divination*, p. 83.

Philo says that the Urim and Thummim were gems cut in the form of teraphim. *Vit. Mos.*, vol. iii. p. 152. Ed. Mangey. But both this and M. Lenormant's idea seem inadmissible.

In the *Speaker's Comment.* it is suggested that the Urim and Thummim were the authorized substitute for the patriarchal teraphim, and that they were used for casting lots. To me this seems fanciful, especially as regards the substitution for the teraphim.

[2] Kohler, p. 380.

moreover, to wait on the priests, and to do the subordinate work for them, in connection with the public ministrations of the sanctuary.[1]

The consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood followed immediately after the erection of the Tabernacle, and occupied seven days, each marked by special ceremonies; after which, on the eighth day, they were allowed to perform their priestly offices. But the great event did not pass off without a sad calamity. Nadab and Abihu, the two elder sons of Aaron, had already been honoured by being allowed to ascend Mount Sinai with the seventy elders and their father, to worship afar off, while Moses approached the Cloud of the Presence. But almost immediately after being set apart to the priesthood, they committed the offence of offering "strange fire;" apparently presenting incense kindled otherwise than from the perpetual fire on the altar; and perished at the hand of God for this wilful transgression of His newly given laws. Can it be that the prohibition of the priesthood from tasting wine or strong drink before entering the Tabernacle, which immediately follows the mention of the catastrophe, is a hint as to its cause?[2]

The closing weeks of the long stay at Sinai were fitly marked by a celebration of the Passover, in commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt, a year before; an incident implying the possession of immense flocks, to supply a lamb for each household. A census was then taken of the men from twenty years of age and upwards, showing as the result, a grand total of 603,550,[3] exclusive of the tribe of Levi, and thus indicating an aggregate, in the whole host, of from two to three million souls. The calculation was

[1] Num. viii. 19; xvii. 2-6.

[2] Rosenmüller, *Scholia* on the verses, Lev. x. 1-3.

[3] Ewald recognizes this great number as correct. *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 277.

based on the gross amount of a head tax of half a shekel, levied, for the Tabernacle, on each man; a method which left the proportion of women and children uncertain. So cherished a precedent, however, did it become, that the attempt by the Romans to introduce a more correct enumeration under Quirinus, in the days of Christ, excited a furious insurrection. A separate census of Levi shewed only 22,000 males, from a month upwards, in this, the smallest by far of all the tribes.[1]

Everything was now ready for departure from Sinai. The Hebrews had encamped on Er Rahah nearly a year before, a mere crowd of fugitive slaves, with only the rudiments of national organization, and the dimmest religious ideas. But the interval had effected an immense change. They had learned, with an impressiveness which they could never forget, that the gods of Egypt, and with them all other gods, were mere delusions and vanities; and that the true God of the whole earth was an Almighty, Invisible Spirit. This Supreme Being had, moreover, taught them that, though unseen, He was near at hand, as a divine Leader and Protector. They had been filled with awe by the terrors of His descent on the Sacred Mountain,[2] but from their

[1] See the figures given for the different tribes, in Num. ii.

[2] In addition to special miraculous appearances and sounds, it seems as if natural phenomena had played a great part in the occurrences of Sinai. These are spoken of in Scripture as accompanied by appalling thunderstorms, with rain and lightning. Judg. v. 4. Ps. lxviii. 7, 8, 9. Josephus, also, describes them in the same way. *Ant.*, V. iii. 2. A modern traveller, narrating the incidents of a thunderstorm he witnessed on the spot, says: "Every bolt as it burst, with the roar of a cannon, seemed to awaken a series of distinct echoes on every side. They swept like a whirlwind among the higher mountains, becoming faint as some mighty peak intervened, and bursting with undiminished volume through some yawning cleft, till the very ground trembled with the concussion. It seemed as if the mountains of the whole peninsula were answering one another in a chorus of the deepest bass. Ever and anon a flash of lightning dispelled the pitchy darkness, and lit up the mount as if it had been day; then, after the interval of a few seconds, came the peal of thunder, bursting like a shell, to scatter its echoes to the four quarters of the heavens, and overpowering for

midst they had heard words of tenderness and sympathy, which kindled their souls, and drew them in loving homage to His feet.

Nor was this all. In recognition of the fact that no law, even the highest, can be effective, without its free and intelligent acceptance by those who are to obey it, their assent had been required and given to a formal covenant, by which they bound themselves and their posterity to honour Jehovah as their supreme Ruler and Lord. In consideration of this, He, on His side, had graciously promised them His special favour as long as they were faithful to Him. It is hard to realize the greatness of the advance implied in such a transaction. Hitherto, idolatry had reigned in all nations, but henceforth, to the Hebrews, Jehovah was the one supreme Power in heaven and earth; filling all creation, by night and day, with His presence, and controlling all things. Hence, even the phenomena of nature seemed to them indications of His nearness and direct agency. The thunder was His voice in the heavens; He made the grass grow on the mountains, and gave rain upon the earth. The firmament shewed His handiwork. When the earth trembled and shook, it was at His approach. And in the same way all human affairs were considered as under His rule, and all endowments of men as His bounty. War and peace, plenty and famine, victory or defeat, the wisdom that guides, the skill that executes, come from Him. It was a great step when such a magnificent conception passed from the bosom of individuals to the creed of a people; a step directly leading to its diffusion, through Christianity, among all mankind.[1]

a moment the loud howlings of the wind." Stewart's *Tent and Khan*, pp. 139, 140. Mr. Drew witnessed a thunderstorm at Serbal, and exclaimed unconsciously, "How exactly like the sound of a trumpet!"

[1] Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 171.

The laws given were necessary to show Israel its duty, for without laws there can be no intelligent obedience. But the supreme aim had been to impress the one great lesson that Jehovah, while strict to avenge transgression, was tender in love, even when forced to punish. That He alone was the God of the whole earth was, however, too great a truth to be realized at once. Nor was it till many generations had passed away that the idols finally lost their hold on the minds of the people; though as early as the days of Moses, by a happy play upon the name Elohim, they were branded, in contrast, as Elilim, or "nothings."[1]

The grandeur of the idea of God thus conveyed was, hereafter, to be strikingly shown by its influences on the national life and religion. To trust in horses or chariots, or in walled towns, seemed utterly unworthy of a people before whose armies the Lord of the whole earth went forth.[2] Nor did the thoughts go anxiously out beyond this life to the unknown future, as in other nations, for whom the world had no satisfying joy. Penetrated with a sense of the presence of Jehovah in their national and individual affairs, they contented themselves with the present; their religion, in this respect, dwelling on life, as that of Egypt, in its supreme concern for the world hereafter, was chiefly concerned with death. Future existence was not denied or contradicted, but the presence of God so filled their thoughts, that it was overshadowed, and made, as it were, subordinate. To secure His favour here involved it hereafter, and hence was their great aim. That the eternal God was their portion and reward in the present, roused in them such a victorious joy, and held out such prospects of earthly blessing, as took away the thought, at once of the terror of death, and of the

[1] Lev. xix. 4; xxvi. 1 (in the Hebrew), see p. 149. [2] Ps. xliv. 9.

rewards of a life to come. They firmly believed, indeed, in a future life: it had come down to them from Abraham as an article of their creed. But, for the time, it was hidden in the splendid vision of their adoption by Jehovah as His people,[1] and only gradually shone out in its due importance when that glory had faded—as the stars appear only when the world grows dark.

The constitution which brought about such a state of things was unique. "Our lawgiver," says Josephus, "had no regard to monarchies, oligarchies, or republics, but ordained our government to be what, by a strained expression, may be called a '*Theocracy*.'"[2] It was not a rule of priests as opposed to kings, but a direct government by God Himself. The will of the individual and of the nation was in all things to be subordinated, in the heart and outward act, to that of their invisible King. The whole community were to live as the servants and champions of Jehovah, whose direct commands were to guide at once the public and personal affairs of the nation. They had seen how weak the greatest of human kingdoms was without the acknowledgment of God, and now expressed their sense of His greatness by recognizing Him as the One earthly as well as spiritual Authority in the State.

Such a government, however, necessitated human agency, to convey the commands of their invisible Ruler to His subjects, and this it found, in the first instance, in Moses; as the prophet, or intermediary, between it and God. He might undoubtedly have proclaimed himself king, but he had no such worldly ambition, and contented himself with the glory of transmitting to his people the will of Jehovah.

[1] Ewald's *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 192.

[2] *Contra Apion*, ii. 17. Josephus, in fact, invented the word, which expressed an idea till then unknown to the Greek language.

Under him the Theocracy flourished, but it was not to be expected that a successor should be found to fill such a dignity. The prophets, indeed, were the heirs of his great office, but they did not come prominently forward till the rise of Samuel, and, meanwhile, the people were left well-nigh to themselves. But the want of a leader, though bitterly felt after the death of Moses, excited no disloyalty to the singular form of government he had established like that of the first kings of many primeval communities, and it was not till the end of the times of the Judges, when the first theocratic enthusiasm of the people had faded, that they sought to imitate other nations, by having a human king.

The institution of the hereditary Levitical priesthood, displacing that of the heads of families, was, as we have seen, the direct result of the catastrophe of the golden calf. It was precluded, however, from assuming such power in Israel as in other communities, by the rise of a succession of prophets, the direct representatives of God, whom even the priests must obey. They could not, therefore, form a Brahminical caste, but always held a modest and limited power in the nation. Nothing, indeed, could well be simpler than the organization of the tribes as they broke up from Sinai. The assembly of the whole male population was the ultimate authority, under God; chieftains or elders exercising a patriarchal headship over each tribe and its larger or smaller sections, and acting as their leaders; as they had done from the days of the patriarchs. The priesthood had no separate authority, for Levi was not the ruling tribe, nor was Aaron, its head, the leader; but Moses—the statesman and prophet, not the priest.[1]

[1] Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 157.

CHAPTER XI.

THE WILDERNESS.

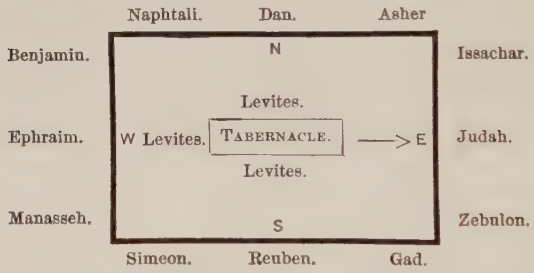
It was not till the second month of the second year that things were finally ready for a fresh advance. Then, at last, it seemed as if the great enterprise of the conquest of Canaan might be undertaken. The arrangements of the vast camp for the march were simple. Shortly after leaving Sinai [1] a council of seventy, of which Hur seems to have been the head,[2] was chosen by the people, from the elders or chiefs of all the tribes except Levi, and solemnly set apart to their dignity by Moses, as a kind of Senate, to aid him by their counsel, and give him the support of leading families among the various tribes; for among a people so hard to govern he often needed this added help.[3] The democracy was thus administered by the chiefs of tribes and their divisions, while over all was Moses, assisted by his court of elders. Great popular assemblies decided questions of national moment submitted to them, but the Supreme authority in all things was that of God, expressed through Moses, as His Prophet.

In the open wilderness the camp was pitched in the form of a long square, guarding the Tabernacle in the centre. When the signal was given to advance, the Levites struck the Sacred Tent, and when the order came to halt they

[1] Num. xi. 16.
[2] Num. x. 1. Exod. xxiv. 9, 14.
[3] Michaelis, *Mos. Recht.*, vol. i. p. 279.

raised it again; no member of another tribe daring even to come near, on pain of death. Alike on the march and when stationary, as already noticed, they alone formed the Tabernacle guard, and took charge of all connected with the sacred furniture and vessels.[1]

To the east of the Sacred Tent, and thus in the place of honour, were the tents of Moses, Aaron and the priests: on each side, and behind it, were the three great divisions of the Levites, who numbered, in all, only between eight



and nine thousand men.[2] The van was held by Judah, supported by Issachar and Zebulon: the left side—that is, the north, was covered by Dan, supported by Asher and Naphtali: the right, or south, by Reuben, supported by Simeon and Gad; and the west, or rear, was left to the protection of Ephraim, with whom were associated Benjamin and Manasseh.[3]

The space occupied by the camp was perhaps not so large as one might have supposed, for in one case at least, in which the precise spot is thought to be still known—the

[1] Num. i. 51; iii. 6 ff. [2] Num. iv. 48.

[3] Each army of three tribes had a "standard," and each subtribe or clan, an "ensign" (Num. ii. 2). The word for standard is derived from a root, meaning "to shine," "to glitter," and perhaps refers to standards similar to those used in the Egyptian armies, which were blazoned with a king's name, or sacred boat; an animal or some emblematic device. Wilkinson, vol. i. p. 342.

encampment at Abel Shittim[1]—the open ground available for it on the east of the Jordan is not more than five miles square; though the host may have been divided, only part occupying this spot. About one-sixth of a square mile sufficed in a Roman camp for 20,000 men, with ample space for streets, officers' quarters, accommodation for horses and baggage; a vacant interval of two hundred feet moreover, being left inside the rampart, all round.[2] This is equivalent to room for 120,000 men in a square mile, or about sixteen square miles for the 2,000,000 of the Hebrews; but the *Speaker's Commentary* suggests that, as they lived together in families, their tents would not cover so much ground. It seems difficult, however, to imagine an encampment of two millions of people, with their cattle, and the wide open space required for the Tabernacle, except as covering a great extent of country with its one-storied dwellings.[3]

As to the formation of the columns on the march we know nothing, but some curious remarks of Kitto deserve notice. Referring to the marginal reading[4] in connection with the Exodus, that the Hebrews marched "by five in a rank," he adds: "It is possible that they may have marched in five large divisions, but that it means 'five in a rank' could only be fancied by those who had no real conception of the numbers of the people. At this rate, if we allow the ranks of only the 600,000 men fit to bear arms to have been three feet asunder, they would have formed a procession

[1] Num. xxii. 1. Note in *Speaker's Bible.* [2] Polybius, vi. 2.

[3] Paris, with its 2,000,000 inhabitants, contains, *inside the fortifications*, 7,800 square hectares=30¼ square miles. The ring of fortifications, closely hemming in the houses, which, indeed, extend in many parts far beyond them, is 36 kilom. long: = over 22 miles. But Paris is built in houses many stories high. Brockhaus, *Conv. Lex.*, art. "Paris."

[4] Exod. xiii. 18.

sixty miles in length, and the van would have reached the Red Sea (in a straight line) before the rear had left Goshen. And if we add to these the remainder of the host, the line would have extended, by the direct route from Egypt, quite into the limits of the land of Canaan."[1] In the wilderness, however, the four great divisions enclosing the Tabernacle, each tribe under its own standard, would, by their broad front, shorten the length of the aggregate columns, though, even then, it must have been like the migration of half the people of the Metropolitan District of London.

The movement of the mysterious cloud which rested on the Tabernacle was the signal for striking or pitching the camp.[2] When it was "taken up" from off it, the advance was sounded[3] on silver trumpets, by the Levites; Moses repeating the words, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered: and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee:"[4] the whole host re-echoing them, far and near, in a mighty shout, as the Ark moved off before them "to search out their next resting place." In the same way, the descent of the cloud to its accustomed place was the intimation to halt, and then, as the Ark was once more solemnly laid down from the shoulders of the Levites, the prayer, caught up from the lips of Moses, and intoned by the whole camp, rose with overpowering sublimity: "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel."[5]

The distance of Sinai, in a straight line, from the south of Palestine is less than two hundred miles, but the configuration of the country made a direct advance to it impracticable. The site of the camp on the plain, beneath the Sacred Mount, had been nearly 5,000 feet above the level of the

[1] Kitto's *Daily Bible Illust.*, vol. i. p. 92. [2] Num. ix. 17.
[3] Num. x. 33. [4] See an allusion to this in Ps. lxviii. 1. [5] Num. x. 33-36.

sea.[1] To ascend from Suez to this table-land had been tedious and often distressing; but, after the rest and comparative comfort of the upland valleys, with their pastures and flowing water, the descent from the successive plateaus, through rugged gorges, without a trace of road,[2] must have been equally hard for so great a multitude—a nation on the march—not yet accustomed to the difficulties of the way. The vast crowds of human beings of all ages, and of both sexes; the trains of beasts and waggons, with the tents and baggage; the herds and flocks, in long-drawn succession—would fill all the ravines, far and near, which pointed at all in the same direction, and the progress made must have been equally slow and painful. Advance to the north was almost impossible, from the trend of the hills across the Peninsula, so that it only remained to skirt their base, and take the north-eastern direction towards the shore of the Gulf of Akaba—the branch of the Red Sea on the east of the triangle of Sinai.[3]

Fortunately, they had with them, at the outset, the local knowledge of Jethro and the Kenites, of whom he was sheik, which must have been of the greatest value.[4] Three days brought them to "the wilderness of Paran,"[5] which seems to have included a wide stretch of the hilly limestone region elsewhere known as the desert of the Tih. Here they made their first encampment, but with a spirit very far from the enthusiasm they formerly felt when expecting to

[1] Wady Feirân is about 4,800 feet above the sea level. Map in *Sinai and Palestine*.

[2] Even in Palestine, at this time, the only tracks—except the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem, which resembles a cart road over a ploughed field—are like the dry bed of the most rocky river, where, amid blocks of stone, each makes his way at a foot pace as best he can.

[3] So Bunsen, Major Palmer, Professor Palmer, Major Conder, and others.

[4] Jethro's farewell salutation, "Go in peace" (Exod. iv. 18), is still used all over the world by the Jews. Mill's *Samaritans*, p. 139.

[5] See vol. i. p. 334.

enter Canaan. Far from Sinai; with only hard, flinty chalk underfoot, and wide, monotonous, rounded hills on every side; the remembrance of the brooks and herbage they had left filled them with discontent and murmuring at their present position, though the cloudy pillar in their midst showed the presence of their Almighty Protector. Such commotions had marked their march from Suez to Sinai, but they had been tenderly dealt with. Since then, however, the relations of God with them had been changed. He was their accepted King and Head, whom they had bound themselves to obey, and murmuring was now to be visited with severe displeasure, as disloyalty and rebellion. In this case, "the fire of Jehovah burnt among them;" perhaps, terrible lightning,[1] setting on fire the tents on the outskirts of the camp,[2] though it is not said that any lives were lost. But a worse calamity soon overtook them. Possibly the sight of the sea, towards which they were approaching, or the miseries of their journey, had awakened thoughts of the past; but, however roused, the crowds of foreign nationalities who had come up with them from Egypt, broke out into loud complaints at the want of the comforts they had enjoyed on the Nile. The manna, which had been so grateful to them at first, had palled on their tastes, and they longed for flesh, or for the fish which was so abundant in Egypt,[3] and "the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic."[4] Great flights of birds are common in the district,[5] and, it may be, added to their discontent, which they expressed with true Oriental demonstrativeness, "every man weeping at the entrance of his tent." A second

[1] *Speaker's Comment.*, vol. i. pt. 2, p. 688.
[2] Hence the name Taberah = burning.
[3] Page 5. [4] Num. xi. 5.
[5] *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 82. Ritter, vol. xiv. p. 261. See p. 244.

supply of quails, which gave them flesh for a month,[1] soon, however, turned their sorrow into rejoicing; but the gift proved a calamity in disguise; the people apparently eating so intemperately, after their long abstinence from flesh, as to bring on a violent outbreak of the plague, of which many died.[2] Strange to say, Professor Palmer found on the way to Akaba the remains of an ancient camp, surrounded by an immense number of graves, which he thinks identifies the spot with the scene of this dreadful pestilence. If he be right, we have still, in these relics, the traces of the Israelitish abode at Kibroth-hattaavah — "the graves of gluttony"— especially as they occur at the distance of three days' journey from Sinai[3]—the position of the Israelites when the plague broke out. He discovered, moreover, a day's journey north of this, the remains of another great camp. Stone heaps and circles cover the hillsides and elevated positions in every direction, and the larger enclosures, occupied by the more important personages, with the hearths or fire-places, are still distinctly traceable.[4] That this is no other than the Israelitish station of Hazeroth—or the "circles" or "enclosures"—hardly admits of doubt, if only from the fact that the name "Look-outs of Hazeroth"[5] is still given to the spot by the Arabs.[6] They have a tradition, moreover, that a great Hajj caravan lost its way here and wandered off into the desert of the Tih;[7] a fact strikingly significant, since Hajj means a great religious pilgrimage—especially that made each year to Mecca, from

[1] It is common, after taking out the entrails, etc., to thrust such birds into the hot sand and dry them, so that they will keep a long time.

[2] Num. xi. [3] Num. x. 33; xi. 4–34.

[4] *The Desert of the Tih*, pp. 7, 8.

[5] Matali Hudherah = Hazeroth. Major Palmer's *Sinai*, p. 79.

[6] Palmer's *History of the Jewish Nation*, pp. 32, 33.

[7] *Desert of the Exodus*, 1871, pp. 357 ff.

all parts of the Mohammedan world. But no such Mohammedan caravan could ever have passed this way. Still more, the word Hajj, which is borrowed from the Hebrew,[1] is the very expression used by Moses when he asked leave from Pharaoh to go with the Israelites, to sacrifice to Jehovah in the wilderness;[2] while that used by the Arabs, in the legend of the pilgrims losing their way, is the stem from which the desert of the Tih, or "wilderness of the wanderings," derives its name. The name Hazeroth was doubtless applied to their encampment here, from their having raised these wide rings of stones to enclose their flocks and herds; branches of acacia and other thorny trees or shrubs being thrust into the top, all round, as is still done on Mount Hermon,[3] for defence against wild beasts, and as were used by the aboriginal "Avim" whom the Hebrews found living in some parts of Palestine, though a closely allied word is still applied by the Arabs east of the Jordan, to the ancient stone circles which speak of a religious origin.

At this place they remained at least seven days, in part through a circumstance that must have greatly affected the already troubled spirit of Moses. Miriam, his sister, to whom, under God, he had owed his preservation in infancy, apparently bore a grudge against Zipporah, his wife, as "a Cushite," and therefore of impure blood.[4] Persuading herself at last that such a union disqualified Moses for his great position as Leader, and jealous of his being the exclusive mouthpiece of God to the host, when she herself was a "prophetess," she induced Aaron to join her in claiming

[1] Heb. *hag*. [2] Exod. x. 9; xii. 14. [3] Palmer's *El Tih*, p. 11.

[4] Some fancy that Zipporah had previously died, and that Moses had taken another wife from the mixed multitude that had come with the Hebrews from Egypt. Schenkel is of the opinion expressed in the text. *Bib. Lex.*, vol. iv. p. 222. Ewald, of the other. *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 251.

that they, also, should be honoured by sharing Divine revelations. But a leprosy, divinely inflicted, instantly checked her ambition, though it could not remove the bitter pains such disloyalty, in his own circle, must have given her great brother.

In this neighbourhood one of the most marked characteristics of the Hebrews as distinguished from all communities, before or since, showed itself prominently for the first time, in connection with the selection by Moses of the 70 elders as his special council, already noticed [1]—the original, in the belief of the Rabbis, and even of some Christian theologians, of the Great Synagogue, to which Judaism owed so much after the return from exile at Babylon.[2] After having been confirmed in their dignity by the people,[3] they assembled round the Sacred Tent, and the strange spectacle was seen, so peculiar to Israel, of the whole number breaking out into prophetic enthusiasm, under the influence of the Spirit of God. The Lord, says the inspired narrative, came down in the cloud, and, having spoken with Moses, took of the Spirit that was on him and gave it to them. While filled with this afflatus they enjoyed prophetic exaltation, but when it passed off they sank into their ordinary state. But the occasion gave an opportunity for noting the lofty spirit of Moses. Two of their number—Eldad, "him whom God loves:" and Medad, "love"—having received the Divine impulse, though they had not joined the rest at the Tabernacle, prophesied where they were, in the camp. To the soldierly instincts of Joshua, however, "the minister of Moses, from his youth up," this seemed an irregularity to

[1] See p. 349.

[2] See an art. by Heidenheim, in *Studien und Kritiken*, 1853, pp. 93 ff. Reland's *Antiq.*, II. iii. 7 ff.

[3] Num. ii. 24, 26.

be checked by his master. "My lord Moses," said he, "forbid them." But he only received the noble answer, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them:"[1] a memorable rebuke, for all ages, to a narrow or jealous spirit, whether in the Church or in common life.

Thus, in its very beginnings, the history of Israel is not that of an inspired book, or of an inspired order, but of an inspired people. The Spirit of God rests on them in a degree, and in a manner, which we meet with in no other race. The seventy, chosen from all the tribes, anticipated, in their prophetic gifts, a characteristic of future generations. Miriam in the camp found a successor in Deborah on Mount Ephraim, nor was there a district in Palestine which did not, apparently, see a prophet or prophetess raised up in it by God, before the gift was finally withdrawn.[2] How great the fervour of religious life in a community, where a succession of individuals could be found, in whom it rose to so transcendent an elevation as is implied in the very name of prophet!

The region though which the Israelites had hitherto marched was a wide tangle of mountains, with occasional broad plains, and numerous narrow wadys, twisting hither and thither. The granite and porphyry of Sinai had begun to give way to sandstone, which now formed the upper part of the rocks; some limestone hills to the north indicating, here and there, the proximity of the chalk ranges of the Wilderness of the Wanderings. Except in the valleys, if the region was then the same as it is now, they had been refreshed by no sight of vegetation; for the mountains rose

[1] Num. xi. 26–30.

[2] Knobel, *Der Prophetismus der Hebräer*, vol. i. pp. 39 ff. Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 158.

bare around them, save where a cleft gave footing for some trace of green. Doum and date palms, patches of broom, isolated clumps of thorny acacias and stretches of wild vines, cheered the hollows, where the sandy soil enjoyed some moisture; while rank herbage marked the edge of the few springs on the route. The colours of the rocks, indeed, alone relieved it to any extent from its savage wildness, but these, seen through the clear air of evening, lent the silent landscape a peculiar beauty. Antelopes still wander over this district, and vultures circle in the upper air, while huge flocks of birds rest in it at times after their long flight from Africa, and wild ducks float on the ponds of Ain el Hudherah or Ain el Alya. The horned viper hides in numbers in the sand, and other kinds of snakes are met with from time to time.[1] But the wadys and plains in the line of march of the Israelites offered for the most part a footing of hard limestone marl; the loose sand occurring chiefly to the northwest of what must have been their route. The approach to Hazeroth, however, had been over sandy plains broken by outstanding sandstone cliffs, but the camp itself had been pitched on the sides and in the basin of a hollow, surrounded by weird and fantastic sandstone walls, displaying on their weathered surface the most varied colours—deep red and violet, and rich gold and scarlet, mingled with deep purple; masses of greenstone, and rose-tinted granite showing here and there. In the middle of the valley, under a high cliff, there is now a dark green palm-grove, while a spring bursts from a rock behind; a channel hewn in the granite guiding the waters to a tank, from which it is led by rude sluices into the gardens of the Arabs who still cling to the spot.[2]

[1] Furrer, *Bib. Lex.*, vol. v. p. 681.

[2] Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*, 1871, pp. 261 ff.

But though rest at isolated and widely separated spots may have been found here and there, the journey in the main, now, and for many a day, must have been often trying. I have myself had a little experience of travelling in the desert, but the sufferings involved in such a journey as that of the pilgrims to Mecca, each year, alone help one to realize those of the Hebrews. "Above," says Burton, who endured this ordeal, "through a sky terrible in its stainless beauty, and the splendours of a pitiless, blinding glare, the simoon caresses you like a lion with flaming breath. Around lie drifted sand-heaps, upon which each puff of wind leaves its trace in solid waves; flayed rocks, the very skeletons of mountains; and hard unbroken plains, over which he who rides is spurred by the idea that the bursting of a waterskin, or the pricking of a camel's hoof, would be a certain death of torture; a haggard land, infested with wild beasts and wilder men; a region whose very fountains murmur the warning words, 'Drink and away.'[1] . . . We travelled five hours through a country fantastic in its desolation—a mass of huge hills, barren plains, and desert vales. Even the sturdy acacias here failed, and in some places the camel-grass could not find earth enough for its root. The road wound among mountains, rocks and hills of granite, and over broken ground, flanked by huge rocks and boulders, piled up as if man's art had aided nature to disfigure herself. Vast clefts seamed, like scars, the hideous face of the earth; here they widened into dark caves; there they were choked with glistening drift sand."[2] The Israelites were passing through such a "desert land" and "waste howling wilderness."[3]

[1] *Meccah and Medinah*, p. 103. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 175. [3] Deut. xxxii. 10.

From Ain Hudherah or Hazeroth to the north end of the Gulf of Akaba is about thirty hours, or nearly ninety miles, but it is hard, if not impossible, to determine whether the host moved on to it now, or touched it first at a later period.[1] It is generally thought, however, that they must have advanced north-east, through a wild confusion of narrow valleys and hills—some of great height, others cleft into awful gorges,[2] such as the tremendous pass at Akaba—till they descended to the seashore, where a varying but well-nigh uninterrupted breadth of strand, under the cliffs, enabled them to reach the head of the gulf. There, it would seem as if we had a trace of the seventh station from Sinai—Hadarah, in the easy but little known pass near Jebel Aradah, which would lead them again, painfully, to the higher level of the Desert of the Wanderings, then known as the wilderness of Paran or Zin, and now as that of the Tih.

This region, in which they were destined to spend so many years, is a series of limestone plateaus ascending in successive giant steps, from the Peninsula of Sinai to the hill country of Southern Palestine.[3] The southernmost of these plateaus extends about eighty miles north from the point where the cliffs of its lower edge pierce the Sinai Peninsula like a broad, blunt wedge. Only a few isolated hills vary the surface, which is generally flat, and there are no signs of ancient dwellings, nor any ruins.

The district north of this has, however, an entirely different character; rising in huge steps of about eighty miles

[1] Graetz, vol. i. p. 395.

[2] The Sinai mountains are, indeed, a lofty triangle, reached on all sides only by a long and difficult ascent.

[3] The ascent from the beginning of the Tih to Hebron is 1,300 feet. Map before *Sinai and Palestine*.

from north to south, and gradually passing, in successive terraces, into the hill country of Beersheba. The most southerly of these, known as the Jebel Magrah, is a great plain of fifty or sixty miles from east to west.[1] Over all this region there still are found fertile spots, with grass and water; and signs of ancient populousness and prosperity appear in every direction. It is the district specially known in the Bible as the Negeb[2] or "South Country." But we must be on our guard not to apply the same standards to an eastern landscape as we do to those of temperate regions, for nothing can be more widely astray than the common conception of what is called among us, with ideas fitting a second Eden, a desert oasis. The valleys of Palestine or Sinai are only rocky gorges or hollows, rough with the countless stones shed from the hills on each side, and cut up through their length by the bed of some torrent, dry in the hot months, but foaming with a wild flood after storms; its sides and bottom a chaos of stones, larger or smaller, through which is the only track most of the year. The oasis round a spring, and the glimpse of green along its short course, are no less different in imagination and reality, as any one may see who passes through some hollow called, perhaps, "The Vale of Flowers," only to find it a barren flat on which a wild shrub blossoms here and there, in evident struggle for existence, during the short cool season. Or let any one ride out from Suez to the Wells of Moses, and in the sandy desolation, broken only by a few stunted palms half buried in the moving surface of the desert, he will see an oasis as it actually is.[3]

Here Moses chose his headquarters, in anticipation of presently passing on to Canaan. On the eastern slopes of

[1] Palmer's *Desert of the Exodus*, *passim*.

[2] Gen. xx. 1. Negeb = the dry, the parched.

[3] See on this subject, Burton's *Meccah*, etc., p. 164.

the hills which form the watershed, lay a wady noted for its pastures and its abundant spring, famous since the days of Abraham, and to this the Hebrews were led. It was Kadesh, or Kadesh Barnea, their rallying point and centre during their whole sojourn in the Negeb. It lies about sixty miles south of Hebron, almost midway between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean coast,[1] and was in every way suited to the design of a sudden invasion of Palestine. The site of this famous spot was first rediscovered in modern times by the Rev. John Rowlands, but it had been lost again when once more found by the acuteness and perseverance of Dr. Clay Trumbull, of Philadelphia. He describes it thus: "Wady Qadees is an extensive, hill-encircled, irregular-surfaced plain, several miles wide. It is certainly large enough to have furnished a camping ground for Chedorlaomer's army or for all the host of Israel. About the middle of the wady is an extensive watershed, of unusual fertility for the desert. Rich fields of wheat and barley covered a large portion of it. There were artificial ridges, to retain and utilize the rainfall, for irrigation. We saw a large grain-magazine dug into the ground. The lintel of the doorway of this granary was a large tree-trunk, larger than we should look for in the desert nowadays." Passing up the wady, he found pits, cisterns, cairns, circles of stones, and low stone walls, perhaps such dams as I have myself seen in the steep pass from the Philistine plains, to Hebron. Then came a rough, stony plain, bordered by dazzling chalk hills, desolation reigning over the landscape, but after three hours, or less than nine miles travel, he turned an angle, and, at last, the wells of Qadees were before him. "It was," says he, "a marvellous sight.

[1] Wilson and Lange's *Maps*. Furrer thinks the name Kadesh, "the holy," is a reminiscence of Moses as a "Saint," or that it was given by the Hebrews to the spot as the site of their local sanctuary while in the wilderness. *Bib. Lex.*, vol. iii. p. 461.

Out from the barren and desolate stretch of the burning desert, we had come with magical suddenness, into an oasis of verdure and beauty, unlooked for and hardly conceivable in such a region. A carpet of grass covered the ground. Fig trees, laden with fruit nearly ripe, dotted the sheltered southern hillside. Shrubs and flowers were in profusion. Running water gurgled in the waving grass. Bees hummed and birds flitted from tree to tree. Huge ant-hills of green grass seed, instead of sand, were numerous. The water which made this beauty rose from springs under the limestone rock and was gathered into two great wells, with large pools beyond them, down the slope, to retain the overflow, but, still beyond these, it flowed away down the wady under the grass. This was the place where Moses fixed his headquarters for nearly forty years."

But even in circumstances so favourable in many ways, the great heart of Moses was doomed to a fresh disappointment. He had hoped at first to break through into Canaan immediately after leaving Egypt, but when the faint-heartedness of the people made this impossible, he had trusted that the year's stay at Sinai, and the more thorough organization it secured, would quicken the general self-reliance sufficiently to warrant an invasion from Kadesh. The evidences of God's presence with them, which they had seen in the Peninsula, and the promises of assistance He had given them, must doubtless have kindled the enthusiasm of many, and it seemed as if the sudden rush of a whole people, in the glow of such a mood, could not fail to carry all resistance before it.

To rouse them still more, he determined to send from Kadesh a number of spies, chosen from among the chiefs of divisions of the twelve tribes. Of these, it is significant, as

showing the religious excitement of the time, half bore such names as Igal, "God saves him;" Hoshea, "deliverance;" Palti, "Jehovah saves;" Gaddiel, "prosperity is from God;" Ammiel, "the servant of God;" and Geuel, "the majesty of God." But, in spite of such names, they sadly failed in the higher qualities which the honour conferred on them demanded. Meanwhile their instructions were wise and comprehensive. They were to find out all they could as to the water supply, the climate, and the fertility of the land: the number and character of its inhabitants, and the strength of their towns and fortresses.

Starting from Kadesh, they went northwards, as ordered,[1] through the Negeb, or "South," to the hill-country of Judæa, and made their way as far, apparently, as the district round Merom, in the north,[2] and to "Rehob," which seems to have stood on the watershed between Merom and the river Litany, on the road to Hamath on the Orontes, and to be identified with the present Hunin, where there are the ruins of a strong fortress, commanding the plains to the east.[3]

It was the season of the first ripe grapes—which, at Hebron, is July or August[4]—and their success in the enterprise was complete; the twelve returning safely to Kadesh, after an absence of about six weeks. But their report was far from encouraging; for, though they could not dispute the fertility of the land, which was proved by samples of pomegranates and figs brought back by them, and by a cluster[5] of grapes so huge, as to require two men to carry it on

[1] Num. xiii. 17. [2] Num. xiii. 21; see 2 Sam. x. 6, 8.

[3] Kiepert's *Map*. Kneucker in *Bib. Lex.*, vol. i. p. 429. Ritter's *Erdkunde*, vol. xv. p. 242.

[4] Seetzen, vol. ii. p. 92.

[5] The grapes of Hebron are the finest in Palestine, and the culture of the vine is still followed round it, more than in any other part of Palestine. Indeed, after leaving Hebron, the only places where I met with vineyards in any number were Bethle-

a pole between them, they gave such an account of the size and fierceness of the inhabitants, and of the strength of their fortresses, as threw the whole camp into despair. It was a decisive moment in their history, and they were not equal to it. Instead of being ready to advance, they were paralyzed with fear. Even the men wept aloud, and in their panic proposed that they should elect a leader and march back to Egypt, rather than face such terrible enemies. In vain did Joshua and Caleb, the only two of the twelve spies who showed a manly spirit, seek to reanimate their courage, and promise them a certain victory if they were faithful to Jehovah. The Divine protection, these brave men maintained, had been withdrawn from their foes, their sins being full; and they would be given over by Him into their hands. But the excitement and demoralization were too great to listen to reason, and the only return for such worthy counsels was a cry from the vast assembly, to stone the speakers. The Canaanites were trained warriors: the Hebrews themselves had recently been slaves, driven by the lash or the stick. The fight with Amalek at Rephidim had stirred up that nation and the other races of Palestine to a fierce resistance, and the camp of Israel was full of women and children. Such terror was unworthy a people led by God Himself, but it was natural. The prize now within reach was thus snatched from their leader and themselves, for the issue of such cowardice could not be doubtful. It was clear

hem and the valley between the two ranges of Lebanon, on my way north, to Baalbek. Rosenmüller, *Das Alte u. Neue Morgenland*, vol. ii. pp. 251–3, quotes numerous authorities as to the weight of occasional single clusters of Palestine grapes. It is as high in some cases as 10 and 12 lbs. The grapes are sometimes like plums, and a single cluster can be carried only by two men, to prevent its being crushed. Kitto mentions a bunch grown in 1819, on a Syrian vine, at Welbeck, which weighed 19 lbs., and was carried by four labourers, on a staff, two bearing it in rotation. *Palestine*, vol. ii. p. 330.

that a multitude so craven and fickle could not be launched against warlike tribes, and hence nothing remained but to continue a wandering life in the wilderness. Born in slavery, with none of the manhood of freemen, they were evidently unfit for so great a task, nor was it more a terrible punishment than a necessity when their Leader announced, that they must wander outside the Land of Promise, till a new and more valiant race had risen in their place. The spies had been forty days in their journey, and for each day the host should pass a year in the wilderness.[1] Only Joshua and Caleb, the two who had shown themselves stout-hearted and faithful, were to enter Canaan.

So stern an announcement at once recalled the host to a sense of their guilt and unmanliness, and made them for the moment as braggart as they had hitherto been pusillanimous. Murmuring as if God had betrayed them, they determined, rather than turn back to the desert, to go up to the attack at once, though the Ark of God, the pledge of His presence, remained in the camp with Moses. But the attempt only led to ignominious failure. The inhabitants of the region between Israel and Palestine were "Amalekites and Canaanites,"[2] who had occupied a comparatively fertile expanse of country, partly arable, partly pastoral,[3] between Kadesh and Engedi. They allowed the invaders to penetrate far towards Palestine, and then, turning upon them, pursued them as far as Hormah ;[4] a city which has been

[1] Num. xiv. 34. Ewald points out that forty years were reckoned a generation by the Hebrews. *Geschichte*, vol. ii. p. 480. Bertheau, *Richter*, pp. xviii. ff.

[2] Num. xiv. 45.

[3] This appears from the two words used in Gen. xiv. 7, and Num. xiv. 25, respectively. The former, *sadeh*, means land capable of cultivation : *emek*, a pastoral plain or upland, not a "valley," as in our version. In Num. xiv. 45, the region is called a "mountain," in reference to the succession of vast terraces by which it had been approached from the head of the Gulf of Akaba.

[4] Num. xiv. 45.

identified as situated on the southern bluff of the table-land, about twenty-four miles north of Kadesh. Its name at the time of the attack was not Hormah, however, but Zephath,[1] "the watch-tower:" "Hormah," "a desolated place," being the name given it after its utter destruction by the Israelites, in the times succeeding Joshua. It was the great point from which the roads across the desert, after having been all united, again diverge towards Gaza and Hebron, and its site is still marked by the ruins of a square tower of hewn stones, with a large heap of stones adjoining, on the top of a hill, which rises a thousand feet above the stony ravine on the edge of which it stands.[2] Smitten and thoroughly demoralized, nothing remained but to draw off the camp to the secure interior of the Negeb or "South," round Kadesh.

The region thus especially destined to be the home of Israel for a generation, is, as has been said, the second great plateau in the ascent from the plain which borders the Sinai Peninsula, stretching east and west from the Mediterranean to the Dead Sea, and the broad sunken valley of the Arabah,[3] or "waste," south of it; and from the mountains of Judah on the north to the edge of the "great and terrible wilderness"[4] on the south.[5] On the east it fringes the west side of the Arabah, with a line of cliffs and hills, in some places 1,400 feet high, seamed into tremendous gorges by the torrents which rush, after storms, from the table-land above. Over against these, on the opposite or eastern side of the Arabah, rises the long line of the Mountains of Edom,

[1] Judg. i. 17.

[2] Dr. Robinson's *Bib. Researches*, vol. i. pp. 291–295.

[3] The word *Arab* comes from the same root — meaning, therefore, an inhabitant of the waste or wilderness.

[4] Deut. viii. 15. *The Negeb*, by Wilton, p. 22. [5] Jud. i. 17.

running, in the same way, nearly north and south. On the western side of the Negeb the descent to the Maritime Plain is more gradual, but there, also, the country is cut up into a great number of wadys. A broad chain of hills extends south-west over this centre of the country, from Hebron to the cliffs facing the desert of the Tih, successive terraces stretching across it, till, at Sebaita or Hormah, hills cover the whole landscape, forming the last of the mountains of Judæa.

At its southern end the Tih, or Desert of the Wanderings, rises four thousand feet, and slopes down gently towards the west and north, until it is lost in sandy dunes, fringing the Mediterranean coast. It is formed of nearly horizontal strata of limestone, with here and there a fault, when sandstone is visible, and forms one vast plain, intersected towards the south by deep fissures, and broken, in places, by mountain ranges. The soil and vegetation are variable, the ground being in many places, for eight or ten miles at a stretch, hard, like rock, and covered with pieces of broken flint, without a scrap of vegetation. In still others, it shows only hard sandstone, with scanty shrubs here and there. Traversing all these, are to be found shallow water-courses called seils—one hundred or more yards wide—and in these are to be found shrubs all the year round, while after heavy rains, grass springs up, yielding good pasture for several weeks, for camels, sheep, and goats. The seils are slightly depressed, and when the rain falls they present the appearance of broad rivers, one hundred yards across and from one to four feet deep.

The so-called River of Egypt, or Wady al Arish, is a large seil, commencing at the southern end of the Tih, and running about one hundred and fifty miles, before it enters the

Mediterranean. This river is, as a rule, a dry and shallow watercourse; but, at times, for a few hours, it is quite full of water, to a depth of three or four feet. The beds of the large seils are very uneven, and the water remains in pot-holes, for some weeks, after heavy rain. Generally there is plenty of rain in January and February. During November, December, and March, there are often dense mists, moist fogs, and heavy dews, which saturate the shrubs with water and even deposit moisture among the rocks, so that flocks do not require watering. Mists depend upon the wind, and often alternate with intense droughts. There are few springs in the Tih, and the Bedouins are often in great straits for water, not many of the springs being permanent. Not only goats, however, but a large number of sheep, of a hardy nature, find sustenance in this desert, and there are also camels, and some horses, which can travel in the regions, provided camels are taken to carry water for them. Bedouins grow corn near the springs, each tribe having its cultivated land as well as its palm groves, but the arable ground is so scarce that a family or portion of a family of these Arabs have in some cases to go a hundred miles or more beyond the territory of their tribe to find a spot that will grow corn. The Israelites had thus as their temporary home a region of rolling plains in successive gigantic steps, in the centre of the land; some spots arable, but mostly wild and forbidding: rising here and there, on the edges, to eighteen hundred or even four thousand feet[1] above the sea, and overlooking the whole land far and near.

The present condition of the district shows a striking contrast to that which marked it in early ages. It has no population but a few tribes of wandering Arabs; boasts of

[1] Professor Palmer's map, *Desert of the Exodus*.

no cultivated tracts, only two inhabited villages,[1] and seems as if it could never have supported any considerable community. Yet even in the Wady Garaijeh, which separates the plateau of the Tih, with its edge of cliffs four hundred feet high, from the Negeb, there are the remains of a small fortress of unburnt bricks and stems of acacia trees, showing that, though now scorched and bare, the soil was once rich in wood.[2] In the Wady Lussân, north of this, are extensive traces of terrace cultivation; long low walls, very carefully built, skirt the hill-side, with provision for regulating the irrigation, and distributing the water collected after the rains. Wady El Ain, also, has strong dams thrown across it for this object. Everywhere, the hills are marked by the ruins of ancient towns or villages, and even of many considerable cities, often containing well-preserved cisterns or reservoirs; and miles of hill-sides and valleys are covered with small stone heaps in regular swaths, along which vines were trained, and which still retain the name of "teleilát el anab," or grape mounds. The spies could thus have procured the clusters they brought to the camp, without carrying them from such a distance as would be necessary in our day; in fact, they might have gathered them near Kadesh. In Joshua,[3] indeed, a list of no fewer than twenty-nine cities of the Negeb is given, where now there is only desolation. Neglect alone has caused this change, by letting the waters supplied by the rains go to waste.

Thus, in the days of Moses, this region must have been much better fitted to sustain a great population, like that of Israel, than could be imagined from its present sterility.

[1] Conder's *Tent Work*, p. 242.

[2] The Egyptian monuments have a picture of Debir in the Negeb, showing it embosomed in trees, with a stream flowing below the hill on which it stood. See vol. I. p. 301.

[3] Josh. xv. 21–32.

Nor was it wanting in local interest, as the home of the patriarch fathers. Beersheba, with the tamarisk grove planted by Abraham, lay to the north of Kadesh ; while not far off was Jebel Yalad, in which some recognize the site of Eltolad,[1] a town of the Negeb in Joshua's list —the scene, it is supposed, of the birth of Isaac, and named after the great event.[2] Close to Kadesh also, on the other side of the hills, to the west, lies Wady Jesur, apparently the Gerar of Isaac, now, as then, partly arable, partly pastoral, and showing still, in every direction, the remains of long ranges of low stone walls, probably once the divisions of cultivated fields.[3]

Nor was animal life wanting. Deer resorted to the pools of rain-water left in the torrent beds, where they could quench their thirst.[4] Doves bred in multitudes in the precipitous sides of the gorges through which these torrents rushed down from the high ground.[5] The lion came up only too often from "the swellings of Jordan, against the habitation of the strong,"[6] that is, from the thickets of the Jordan valley to "the rock pastures" of the Negeb. Even at this day, indeed, it seems not unknown in these parts, for Mr. Kinglake thinks he met with the "fresh prints of a lion's foot" in the desert south of Gaza.[7] Leopards, wolves, hyænas, ibexes, gazelles, hares, jerboas, rats, and mice are more or less common. Rodents abound in some parts, and appear to be chiefly nocturnal in their habits. The number of their holes and the abundance of their tracks is astonishing, while, like most of the other creatures of the region,

[1] From its meaning, "born of God," or "a supernatural birth."
[2] *The Negeb*, p. 180.
[3] Ibid., p. 240. This description of the Negeb is from Wilton and Palmer.
[4] Ps. xlii. 1. [5] Cant. v. 12. [6] Jer. xlix. 19 ; l. 44.
[7] *Eothen*, p. 348. He is not supported, however, by authorities generally, in thinking that there are still lions in Palestine.

their colours are very much those of the places they frequent. In Joshua's day the jackal was so abundant that one of the local "cities" was called Hazar Shual, "the jackal village."[1] The horse and the ox were not suited for stony uplands, and hence we never find them mentioned in the Bible in connection with this region, but there were herds of camels, and flocks of sheep and goats, and asses abounded. In every passage respecting the Negeb in which riding is mentioned, the animal is either an ass—as in the cases of Abraham, Achsah, and Abigail—or a camel, as in those of Eliezer, Rebecca, or the 400 Amalekites.[2]

Water,[3] that prime necessity of Eastern life, was to be found at all seasons; for the rains sink through the porous chalk soil, and are stopped by the hard limestone beneath. Hence, as we see in the case of Isaac, to sink wells always secures a ready supply.[4] There were, moreover, the torrents of the gorges, which could easily be utilized by reservoirs and dams, as was afterwards done so largely in this very region. In spring, the hills were ablaze with flowers, and comparatively rich in soft grass; and even in the hot summer there was always some pasturage for vast flocks and herds when dispersed into the many wadys, for herds and flocks find a living in Palestine even when the landscape seems bare. Tristram, indeed, speaks of the great number of camels, sheep, and goats, gathered together on a special occasion at a given point in these thirsty uplands, and

[1] Josh. xv. 29; xix. 3.

[2] Gen. xxii. 3, 5; xxiv. 10, 61-64. Josh. xv. 18. 1 Sam. xxv. 18, 20, 23: xxx. 17

[3] Speaking of Arab songs, Burton says: "If you listen to the words, you will surely hear allusions to bright verdure, cool shades, bubbling rills, or something which, hereabouts, man hath not, and yet which his soul desires." *Meccah and Medinah*, p. 100.

[4] There are no springs in the Negeb, from the porousness of the soil. The waters gather in the wadys, under the surface, when the limestone is reached, and flow towards the sea as underground streams. *Tent Work*, p. 242.

Conder, also, notes their abundance.[1] "We wished," adds Tristram, "that those who cannot comprehend how the Israelites had such vast flocks and herds in the wilderness could have witnessed the gathering of to-day, and how, in a few hours, thousands upon thousands of cattle could be collected in a given track."[2]

The years of wandering would have their bright and cloudless weeks and months; but they would be marked also in these uplands by the blinding sandstorms and overpowering sirocco winds of summer, while the elevation of the plateau would bring storms of snow and sleet in winter.[3] Nor would these be the only troubles and discipline of the wilderness. The number of the Israelites after the forty years was nearly 2,000 men less than at their commencement,[4] in spite of the births during that long time. That this did not rise from want of food we may be certain, for they had the manna till they reached Canaan. Like many Arab tribes, they may have sown grain yearly in suitable parts[5]—palm trees here and there would aid; their herds were large; they had wine to drink at the feast of the golden calf;[6] they had bread and oil;[7] they were always near the populous mountains of Edom, and were able to buy from the Edomites "meat and water," paying for both in money;[8] and when commanded at last to cross the Jordan,

[1] *Tent Work*, p. 248.
[2] *The Land of Israel*, p. 384.
[3] Palmer, *passim*. Wilton, *passim*.
[4] Num. i. 2, 3; xxvi. 51.
[5] Gen. xxvi. 12; xxxvii. 7. The clothing of the Hebrews was secured by their possession of herds and flocks, the hair and wool of which would, of course, be spun and woven by the women. There is nothing contrary to this in Deut. viii. 4; xxix. 4, 5. The words, "waxed not old upon," should in both passages be read, "fell not from off;" *i.e.*, they were never without suitable clothing.
[6] When the people are said (Exod. xxxii. 6) to have held a religious feast, the consecrated flesh and wine for sacrifices and drink-offerings are implied: "They ate and drank."
[7] Lev. viii. 2, 26, 31; ix. 4; x. 12; xxiv. 5. Num. vii. 13.
[8] Deut. ii. 6.

they had such abundance of food of various kinds that the whole host could "prepare victuals" three days before, to be ready.[1] It seems beyond question, therefore, that a destruction of life so vast could only have been caused by severe and frequent wars, often at first unsuccessful, with the races to whom the Negeb belonged, or with those on its borders. In such a school their manly virtues would be developed; nor is it too much to say that such a training alone explains how the sons were, at last, under Joshua, so warlike, as compared with their fathers.[2]

Only a very few glimpses are afforded of the history of the next thirty-seven years; but, few though they be, they throw interesting light on the wilderness life. On one occasion[3] the son of an Israelitish woman and of an Egyptian, one of the "mixed multitude" which had left the Nile Valley with the Hebrews, had wandered from his own quarters in the camp into those of the Israelites,[4] which he had no right to enter; the offspring of such marriages as that of his parents being excluded from the community till the third generation.[5] A dispute having risen between him and a Hebrew, the unfortunate man allowed himself, in the heat of passion, to blaspheme the name of God, and was at once brought before Moses for the crime. The penalty was terrible, for the offence struck at the root of the national constitution, and imperilled the very object of the separation of Israel from other nations. No similar case had risen before, so that a special law had to be made for it; but this was

[1] Josh. i. 11. [2] See art. in *Studien und Kritiken*, by Vaihinger, 1871, p. 771.

[3] Lev. xxiv. 10.

[4] Each tribe was encamped by itself (Num. ii. 2). The Targum of Palestine says, the offender sought to pitch his tent in the tribe of Dan, and, on being resisted, took the case to the "House of Judgment," where it was decided against him; and that then, in the rage at his defeat, he committed the crime alleged.

[5] Deut. xxiii. 7, 8.

presently announced in the name of Jehovah Himself. The blasphemer was to be led outside the camp and stoned to death; those who had heard his words laying their hands on his head,[1] and throwing the first stones, as responsible for the truth of the charge against him;[2] the crowd around then joining in the execution.

It is striking to notice, that in the Hebrew text it is only said that he blasphemed THE NAME;[3] what that was being left unwritten. On this omission the later Jews grounded their prohibition of the use of the word Jehovah, under almost any circumstances. "Those who utter the name of God according to its sound," says the Talmud, "have no position in the world to come."[4] The priests might use it in the temple services, but even they were not to let it cross their lips elsewhere.[5] In the Hebrew Bible the vowels of the word Adonai—Lord—are placed below it, and in the Greek it is always suppressed, the word Kurios, "Lord," being used in its place; a practice followed by the English version. Traces of this aversion to utter the Divine name occur early in the Old Testament, as where it is withheld from Jacob at Peniel,[6] and from Manoah.[7]

This dread of using the special name of the Deity characterized antiquity from the earliest ages, through the belief that it expressed the awful mysteries of the Divine essence, and was too holy to be breathed. Thus the "name of God is in the Angel" who was to lead Israel through the wilder-

[1] See Lev. i. 4; xxiv. 14. [2] Deut. xvii. 7.

[3] Lev. xxiv. 11, 16.

[4] *Sanhedrin*, x. § 1. The Septuagint reads, "Whosoever shall name the name of the Lord shall die" (Lev. xxiv. 16); and Philo says, "He who utters the name of the Lord at an unfit time shall die" (ii. 166).

[5] Buxtorff's *Heb. and Chald. Lex.*, p. 2432.

[6] Gen. xxxii. 29.

[7] Judg. xiii. 18. "Secret" there = "Wonderful." Josephus speaks of the name of God as not to be uttered. *Ant.*, II. xii. 4.

ness,'[1] and the temple was to be built for "the Name,"[2] but in neither case is it given. Such reverence, just in itself, early led, however, to many superstitions. The knowledge of the secret name of any god or angel was thought to convey, to him who knew it, the control of their supernatural powers. He who discovered the hidden name of the god Ea, of the Accadians, became invested with attributes higher than those of the gods.[3] The name, in fact, was regarded as a personification of its owner, with which was indissolubly connected the possession of his essential characteristics. Thus the Romans used the word "numen" for a divinity, by a mere play on the word "nomen," "a name."[4] Among the Egyptians there was a god whose name it was unlawful to utter;[5] and it was forbidden to name or to speak of the supreme guardian divinity of Rome.[6] Even to mention a god's name in taking an oath was deemed irreverent.[7] In the Book of Henoch[8] a secret magic power is ascribed to the Divine Name, and "it upholds all things which are." Men learned it through the craft of the evil angel, Kesbeel, who, in heaven, before he was cast out, gained it by craft from Michael, its original guardian. Nor did the ancient world, alone, regard a name as thus potent. The Scandinavians firmly believed that if that of a fighting warrior were spoken out loud, his strength would immediately depart from him, for his name was his very essence.[9] At this day, moreover, the true name of the Emperor of China is kept a profound secret, never to be uttered—per-

[1] Exod. xxiii. 21.

[2] 2 Sam. vii. 13: "He shall build an house for My Name."

[3] Lenormant, *La Magie*, p. 41.

[4] If indeed it be not from "nuo," *to nod*.

[5] Cic., *De Nat. Deor.*, iii. 22.

[6] Plutarch, *Quæst. Rom.*, 6.

[7] *Schol. Aristoph.*, *Ran.*, 1421.

[8] *Das Buch Henoch*, Kap. lxix.

[9] *Good Words*, 1865, p. 620. See on this curious subject, further, Ewald, *Geschichte*, vol. iv. pp. 254 ff.

haps to impress his subjects with his unapproachable elevation above common mortals.[1]

Another incident recorded throws a strong light on the strictness with which the laws given at Sinai were enforced; doubtless to stamp ineffaceably on the heart of the nation the moral lessons intended. A man was found gathering sticks on the Sabbath day,[2] and was instantly brought before Moses. There was no question as to the penalty, which had been already declared to be death;[3] but it was not yet disclosed how it was to be inflicted. Now, however, it was made known that the offender was to be taken outside the camp and stoned to death, and this was forthwith done.

But individual declensions, inevitable in the establishment of a religion so pure and lofty, among such a people and in such an age, were not the only difficulties with which Moses had to contend. The great religious revolution, which had substituted the priesthood of Aaron and the services of the Levites for those of the fathers and elder sons of the community, had not been effected without opposition, and this came to a head, at last, in a movement which might easily have been perilous. Korah, a Levite, and Dathan and Abiram, of the tribe of Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob, rose against Moses, after having gained over to their conspiracy no fewer than two hundred and fifty chiefs of the congregation—heads of tribal divisions—and, as such, their representatives in the popular assembly of Israel.[4] The matter was the more serious as Korah was a full cousin of Moses and Aaron—Izhar,[5] his father, being Amram's brother.[6] He now claimed priestly rights for himself, and

[1] Remusat, *Nouv. Mél. As.*, vol. ii. p. 6. [2] Num. xv. 32–36.
[3] Exod. xxxi. 14, 15; xxxv. 2.
[4] Num. xvi. 2. This is implied in the Hebrew words used.
[5] Izhar = fresh oil. [6] Exod. vi. 18.

his family; his two hundred and fifty supporters, who were, very probably, for the most part, first-born sons, demanding them also.[1] Dathan and Abiram, as Reubenites, had apparent ground for claiming worldly rather than spiritual advantages from their descent.[2] With them, for the moment, was associated another Reubenite—On—but he appears presently to have withdrawn from their plans, for his name does not appear again.

The whole company of the disaffected, having gathered together before Moses and Aaron, stated their grievance. "The two took too much upon them, seeing that all the congregation were holy, every one of them, and that Jehovah was among them: why did they lift up themselves above the congregation?" It was a protest against the new priesthood and Levitical service, and a demand that things should be restored to their old position in these respects. But Moses met them calmly. Next day would show which side was right. Let the whole company present themselves with lighted censers, and those whom God should choose would be "holy." They took too much on them, he added. God had honoured the tribe of Levi by bringing it near Him, to do the service of His Tabernacle: would they seek the priesthood as well?

Dismissing them thus for a time, Dathan and Abiram, who had kept aloof, were next summoned to appear before him. Instead of complying, however, they repelled the command with bitter reproaches against Moses. "Was it a small thing," they asked, "that he had brought them up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill them in the wilderness? and would he now go on even to play the prince over them? Besides, where was the grand country

[1] Exod. xxii. 29. [2] Gen. xlix. 3.

he was to get for them? where were the fields and vineyards he had promised? Would he put out their eyes to keep them from seeing how little his words were in keeping with his deeds? We will not come!"[1]

A few hours, however, crushed this threatening revolt. On Korah and his company presenting themselves at the entrance of the Tabernacle with their censers, "fire from the Lord" burst out on them, and destroyed the whole two hundred and fifty.[2] Nor was the end of Dathan and Abiram, who remained in their tents, less tragical, for a miraculous cleft in the earth suddenly opened beneath them, and they and all belonging to them disappeared for ever. The danger, however, was not over even yet. The whole camp had sympathized with the attempt to restore the old state of things for which the Levitical reforms had been substituted, and now openly clamoured against Moses and Aaron for having, as they asserted, "killed the people of Jehovah." But this, in the end, added to the triumph of the new constitution; for a divinely-sent plague presently broke out in the camp, and was stayed only by Aaron rushing with his kindled censer between the living and the dead, and thus making an atonement for the sin of the rebels. In all, with the number who perished with Korah, nearly 15,000 had already fallen. Henceforward, the rights of the Levites and of the priesthood were unchallenged during the whole history of the nation. The crisis, however, was not suffered to pass away without a memorial which should keep it from being for-

[1] This is a close paraphrase of the verses, Num. xvi. 13, 14. The Targum of Palestine says, "Wilt thou blind the eyes of the men of that land, that thou mayest overcome them?"

[2] The children of Korah did not suffer. Exod. vi. 24. Num. xxvi. 11. 1 Chron. xv. 5. 2 Chron. xx. 19.

gotten. The heads of the twelve tribes, including Levi,[1] were distinguished by carrying a rod or sceptre of office. These were now ordered to be laid before Jehovah in the Tabernacle, that it might be shewn by a miraculous sign in connection with them, how undoubted was the Divine approval of the choice of Aaron and the Levites as the ecclesiastical officials of the host. Nor could there be any hesitation, for, on the morrow, it was found that the "rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi, was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds."[2] Henceforth, by command, it was laid before the Ark as a standing testimony of God's will.[3] The effect of such a wonder, added to all that had preceded, was overpowering. Far and near through the whole camp only one cry was heard: "We die, we perish, we all perish: whoever comes at all near the dwelling-place of Jehovah dieth: shall we ever have finished with dying?"[4]

It is to be noticed that the Divine instructions to Aaron respecting the special duties of the priests and Levites are inserted immediately after the account of this crisis,[5] as if, till then, nothing had been definitely settled.

Various laws demanded by new and unforeseen exigencies seem, indeed, to have been framed and published from time to time, during we know not how long after Israel left Sinai. In all nations it must be so, for no legislation can anticipate the requirements of the future, in detail. General principles were laid down in advance, but

[1] Ephraim and Manasseh had been reckoned as one tribe—that of Joseph.

[2] Num. xvii. 8.

[3] The fact that Aaron's rod was thus said to have been laid before the Ark is a strong proof of the historical truth of the incident. For how could an appeal have been thus made to evidence, which at any time could have been shown to be imaginary, if the rod were not thus preserved?

[4] Schlottmann and Driver. [5] Num. xviii.

as in the case of the blasphemer, the Sabbath breaker, and the numerous isolated enactments in Numbers and Deuteronomy, new laws, or more explicit definitions of those already given, must have been added to the statute-book, year after year. And this continued with the Hebrews as with other nations; for, just as the laws of William the Conqueror, or of Elizabeth, are necessarily, in many respects, obsolete in our day, from the lapse of time, and changes in national customs and life, and need to be modified to suit the present; so the Mosaic laws, in the course of ages, grew largely out of date and incapable of execution, though the great principles on which they rested remained the same. The whole system of the Rabbinical laws of later Judaism, in fact, sprang from the desire to adapt the ancient laws of the Pentateuch to the times, by silently allowing many particulars to remain in the oblivion into which they had long fallen, and developing others only too elaborately.

The effect of the repeated risings of the people as a whole, or of sections of them, as in the case of Korah, must have weighed heavily on the spirit of their great leader. He saw all his dreams of guiding them into the Promised Land dissipated, for he was an old man, and the sentence dooming the existing generation to die in the wilderness virtually included himself: already over eighty, he could not hope to survive another race of his fellows? With all his sublime trust in Jehovah, so often shown, and embodied so grandly in the religious history of the nation on which he impressed his spirit, he, at last, for a moment despaired, and fell into the same distrust as had so often grieved his soul in others.[1] The people were camping somewhere in the neighbourhood of the eastern hills of the Negeb, and once more suffered

[1] Num. xx. 10-12.

greatly from want of water; the wells and torrent beds yielding too little, or perhaps having failed at the time from drought. Loud reproaches for being led from Egypt to such a wilderness rose on every side, and the old laments were heard, that they had not died with their brethren, who had already perished by the way. They forgot the rock smitten at Rephidim, and the manna of each day, and unhappily influenced even Moses and Aaron for the instant. As might have been expected, from their Divine Protector, who had cared for them so long, a command presently came that the two leaders should speak to the bare crag,[1] in the sight of all the people, and water would flow from it. But the lofty, immovable trust of Moses in the Divine word was for the moment shaken.

> "They angered Him at the waters of strife.
> So that it went ill with Moses for their sakes;
> Because they rebelled against His (God's) Spirit,[2]
> So that he (Moses) spake unadvisedly with his lips."[3]

Obeying the command, he was yet uncertain and hesitating as to the result, and openly showed his doubts; as if the Almighty could not do whatever He pleased, or would not fulfil His word. "Can I bring water," cried he, in the hearing of all, "from the dry, solid rock?" He had been commanded to speak only, and the water would flow; but in his excitement, he smote the hard stone. Water came as had been promised, but the momentary distrust brought a final and formal exclusion of the great leader and his brother from the land they had so longed to enter.

Was it at this time, or, possibly, at some later day in the weary life of the wilderness, with the generation he had

[1] The word is "crag." [2] Lengerke, p. 569. [3] Ps. cvi. 32, 33.

brought from Egypt dying out, and friend after friend passing from his side, that Moses composed the ninetieth psalm? Alike in its Hebrew and its tone it accords so well with the circumstances of the great leader that few critics venture to question the correctness of the tradition which ascribes it to him. As the cry of his troubled spirit, amidst so much to oppress it, his exclusion from the land he so longed to enter seems a fitting occasion for its first utterance.

"O Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations!
Before the mountains were brought forth
Or ever Thou hadst formed the (circle of the) earth and its habitable parts,[1]
Even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God!
Thou turnest man back to dust,
And sayest (to a new generation), Come back (to life), ye children of men.
For a thousand years, in Thy sight,
Are but as yesterday as it was passing,
And as a watch (of a few hours) in the night.

Thou carriest them away as if by a flood. They are as a sleep:
In the morning they are like grass springing up.
In the morning it flourishes and springs up;
In the evening it is cut down, and it withers up.
For we are consumed by the breath of Thy wrath,
And by the glow of Thine anger are we suddenly cut off.
Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee,
Our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance.

For all our days have passed away under Thy wrath;
Our years have gone over us like an empty, vanishing sound.
The days of our years are threescore years and ten,
Or, if we be strong, they may reach fourscore years;
Yet is their pride but labour and sorrow.
For it is soon gone, and we fly away.
Who knoweth the power of Thine anger,
Or has a fear of Thee in keeping with (this awful power of) Thy wrath?

[1] The Hebrew word is thus translated in Prov. viii. 31.

So teach us to number our days aright,
That we may get us a truly wise heart!

Turn (from Thy wrath against us), O Lord—(oh! how long has it burned!)
And have compassion upon Thy servants.
Oh, satisfy us, as this morning (of pity) breaks, with Thy mercy,
(For it has been night on Israel, Thou knowest how long)
And, so, we shall rejoice and be glad all our days.
Make us glad, according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us,
And the years wherein we have seen evil.
Make Thy work (in their behalf) appear unto Thy servants;
And Thy glory upon their children.
Let the living good-will of the Lord our God shew itself upon us:
And establish Thou the work of our hands upon us;
Yea, the work of our hands, establish Thou it."

CHAPTER XII.

THE EVE OF THE CONQUEST.

As the long centuries during which the Hebrews remained in Egypt are passed over without notice in the Scripture narrative, there is a long interval of thirty-seven years silently ignored between the events recorded in the thirteenth verse of the twentieth chapter of Numbers, and that mentioned in the fourteenth verse. The discipline of the wilderness had done its work. For a generation Israel had led a nomadic life, passing from place to place as pasturage invited, though Kadesh had been their centre; their movements, no doubt, bringing them often into fierce conflict with the tribes whom they for the time at least virtually dispossessed. The men who had come from Egypt gradually died out, and their sons had grown, under the inspiration of Moses, and those associated with him, into a strong and vigorous nation. He had given them a constitution which was democratic in the noblest sense, for every Israelite, whether poor or rich, was equal before the law and was a free man. They had been taught to feel themselves the people of God; and to treat them like slaves, as the Pharaohs treated the Egyptians, was a crime against Jehovah.[1] Moses, though their leader and dictator, bore himself as only the instrument and voice of God, from whom their laws came, and to whom, supremely, they owed spirit-

[1] Bunsen's *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 189.

ual and temporal obedience. All the legislation given them had been based on the recognition of the highest moral law, and embodied the purest and loftiest conceptions of duty to God and man. Love of their neighbour, brotherly fellowship, equality as Israelites, gentleness, and absolute uprightness, were the ideals he had set before them. Such maxims and laws were impressed on them till they became instinctively recognized, however at times contravened or forgotten. In the words of the prophet, these years saw the kindness of their youth and the love of their espousals to Jehovah,[1] when, as His betrothed bride, they followed the Pillar of His Presence through the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.[2] In the song of Moses we read how—

> "Jehovah found His people in the waste;
> And in the wilderness, and howling steppes,
> He compassed them about, He tended them,
> He guarded them as the apple of His eye.
> As the eagle watches over her nest;
> Hovers over her young, spreads wide her wings,
> Takes them and bears them on her feathers;
> So Jehovah, only, led them,
> And no strange god was with them."[3]

Nor were their manly virtues less strengthened and developed than their religious ideas. The energies called forth by the necessities, conflicts, and perils of a desert life; the quickening breath of the pure air of the wilderness; a love of freedom kindled into a passion by its enjoyment for a generation; the communion with nature in its silent vastness and sublimity, bringing them face to face with God and their own thoughts; the interdependence fostered by

[1] Lengerke acutely remarks (*Kenaan*, p. 385), that the imagery of the espousal of Jehovah to Israel after the Exodus presupposes their having before that time been devoted, in a large measure, to other gods.

[2] Jer. ii. 2. [3] Deut. xxxii. 8, 10. Knobel, Graetz, and Lange.

common action as a people; the free constitution they enjoyed, and, above all, the grand religious conceptions which roused all that was noble in the soul, had effaced the servile taint of Egypt, called out the slumbering qualities of the race, and restored them to the vigorous tone of their shepherd ancestors.

But it was necessary that the wandering life should end, now it had served its purpose, else they might permanently sink into desert tribes, like those around them. At last, therefore, the command was given to prepare for taking possession of the long-promised land of Canaan. How to reach it, however, was as yet undetermined. Approach from the south was barred by the elaborate preparations of the inhabitants; though a successful attack on the King of Arad,[1] a chief of the Negeb, who had taken part in their defeat at Hormah, in Zephath, long years before, showed that the present generation were very different men from their fathers.

But the long years that had passed since leaving Egypt, had told on the strongest and most vigorous survivors of the old Egyptian times. Hitherto, the immediate circle of their great leader had been unbroken; but now it was to render its first tribute to death. Moses and Aaron were to be spared to each other a little longer—only a little—but Miriam was to leave them. She died towards the close of the wanderings, at Kadesh,[2] and was buried there, as Josephus says, "upon a certain mountain called Sin," not yet identified, "with great pomp,"[3] and amidst a general sorrow, which was expressed, as in the case of her brothers afterwards, by a public mourning for thirty days. Older than Moses, she could hardly have been less than one hundred and twenty

[1] Num. xxi. 21-24. [2] Num. xx. 1. [3] *Ant.*, IV. iv. 6.

when she died ; but henceforth the two brothers were alone, and it was certain that ere long even they must be parted.

The direct route northwards being impracticable, the next best lay up the broad sunken plain of the Arabah, to the southern end of the Dead Sea, where they could pass round the foot of the mountains of Edom into Moab ; which, with the country of the Ammonites, extended along the east side of the Jordan. The peoples of all three were related, by descent, to the Hebrews, and Moses might expect that friendly feeling would be shown him and his host, since he only wished to pass quietly through their territory, and had no intention of disturbing them. He therefore appealed to Edom for permission to cross its northern edge, promising to injure nothing, and to keep strictly to the beaten tracks ; much as the Helvetii sought permission from Cæsar to pass quietly through part of Gaul under Roman influence, to the districts on the western coast, in search of a new home, instead of that from which they had been virtually driven out by German tribes. In both cases, as was natural, and we may believe the uniform practice, in the wildly unsettled state of tribal and national boundaries and public rights in antiquity, the fear of even a peaceful invasion by such a multitude expressed itself in a refusal, accompanied with a display of force, to be used if needed.

It only remained, therefore, to journey down the Arabah to the head of the Gulf of Akaba, a branch of the Red Sea, and turning, thence, round the south end of the mountains of Edom, to march northwards towards Canaan, outside their eastern slope. But a melancholy interruption to their progress was at hand. High above the hills in which now stand the wondrous rock-hewn ruins of Petra, a lofty double peak, which has been habitually known as Mount Hor, is

seen to the north-west. To use the words of Ritter, it towers in lonely majesty, rising high aloft into the blue sky, like a huge, grand, but shattered, rock city, with vast cliffs, perpendicular walls of stone, pinnacles and naked peaks of every shape.[1] The view from the summit, however, is disappointing, and bears no comparison with that obtained from the peaks of Sinai, the horizon being filled up, on the east, by the monotonous tableland of Edom, which rises to an average height of about five thousand feet, at this part, and offers only a chaos of slopes and cliffs of bare white limestone, though the rock is largely hidden by quite a forest of stunted green. Juniper grass grows abundantly, almost to the summit of the mountains; and there are many flowering plants, most of them thorny, however, though some are very beautiful. In front of the mountain the eastern hills recede, leaving a sort of amphitheatre before it, in the centre of which it rises magnificently. To the south, there is a mountain of white limestone over which it towers, gaining by the contrast of its dark red hue with the white. Looking thus from the south, the mountain appears to rise in several pinnacles, the highest of which is surrounded by a glistening white dome covering the supposed tomb of the patriarch Aaron. If this be the true Mount Hor, on one of the heights of this great natural altar, Aaron was destined to breathe his last, in the arms of his son and successor, Eleazar, and beside the true and loving brother, who had been his guiding star through life. The sublime mountain was a fitting scene for the death of such a man. That he so naturally took the position becoming him, as a faithful instrument and conscientious counsellor of his still more illustrious brother, and as the interpreter and representative

[1] Ritter, *Erdkunde*, vol. xiv. p. 1127.

of his grander spirit,[1] shows his greatness; his lofty piety has its record in his life as a whole.

It is right to say, however, that the traditional Mount Hor is not accepted universally as the true scene of Aaron's death. The present Mount Hor is one of the mountains of Edom, near Petra, but Moses had "turned away" from Edom when refused a passage through it. Hor means, simply, mountain, and is thus used for Hermon.[2] Israel could hardly have marched into the heart of Edom after being thrust away from it; far less camp in the neighbourhood of its capital, and bury Aaron there. Besides, when the Hebrews moved from Kadesh Barnea to Mount Hor, they must have gone northwards, for it is said they alarmed Arad, the Canaanite king, by their coming in his direction, whereas they would have been going from him, if the traditional Mount Hor be the true one. It so happens, moreover, that there is, within a day's march of Kadesh, a remarkable hill called Moderah, standing up in isolation from the plain, on the very border, one may say, of the land promised to Israel, and we find that the mountain on which Aaron died is called Mosera in Deuteronomy.[3] Is not this, ask some, the true site?

On whichever height, however, it was that Aaron passed away, no incident could be more touching than the ascent of the two venerable brothers and the son, on such an errand. The lonely height; the robes taken from the dying man that they might be put on Eleazar, as the successor in his pontificate; the very landscape on which his eyes now rested, move us. If they climbed to the top they would see around them a wilderness of craggy summits, the very

[1] Bunsen, *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 214.
[2] Num. xxxiv. 7, 8.
[3] Deut. x. 6.

image of desolation, sinking into a maze of fathomless defiles, which formed the ancient territory of Edom. To the west, the valley of Arabah lay at their feet, like the bed of a vast river, encumbered with shoals of sand, and sprinkled over with stunted shrubs; beyond, stretched out the desert, in which they had wandered for now thirty-eight years. To the north, the rounded hills of the Promised Land faded away like waves in the distance—those hills so ardently longed for, which neither Moses nor he was ever to tread. To the south, the Arabah stretched on towards the Red Sea, marking the future path of the tribes, when they would "compass the land of Edom." To the east, the sky rested on a magnificent range of yellow mountains, through the valley between which and Edom, Israel would presently march northwards to the conquest of its long-sought inheritance.

A tomb on the top of the mountain, as I have said, is honoured by the Mohammedans as that of Aaron. It has been built on the site of a much better edifice, of Christian origin, some of the mosaics of which are still seen in the floor of the present structure. If the great high priest lie here, his body is deep down, out of sight, below the floor, though, indeed, no one can believe that such a vault could have been excavated by Moses and Eleazar.

The death of Aaron has been made the subject of touching legends by the Rabbis. One of them is as follows:

"Moses was full of grief when the word of the Lord came to him that Aaron, his brother, was to die. That night he had no rest, and when it began to dawn towards morning, he rose and went to the tent of Aaron, who was much surprised to see his brother come so early, and said, 'Wherefore art thou come?'

"Moses answered, 'All night long have I been troubled, and have had no sleep, for certain things in the Law came upon me, and they seemed to me heavy and unendurable. I have come to thee that I may relieve my mind.' So they opened the book together; and at every sentence they said, 'That is holy, and great, and righteous.' Soon they came to the history of Adam; and Moses stayed from reading when they arrived at the Fall, and he cried bitterly, 'O Adam, thou hast brought death into the world!'

"Aaron said, 'Why art thou so troubled thereat, my brother? Is not death the way to Eden?' 'It is, however, very painful,' said Moses. 'Think, also, that thou and I must some day die. How many years thinkest thou we shall live?' *Aaron.* 'Perhaps twenty.' *Moses.* 'Oh, no! not so many. *Aaron.* 'Then fifteen.' *Moses.* 'No, my brother, not so many.' *Aaron.* 'Then surely it must be five?' *Moses.* 'I say again, not so many.' Then said Aaron, hesitating, 'Is it then one?' And Moses said, 'Not so much.'

"Full of anxiety and alarm, Aaron kept silence. Then said Moses gently, 'O my beloved! would it not be good to say of thee as it was said of Abraham, that he was gathered to his fathers in peace?' Aaron was silent.

"Then said Moses, 'If God were to say that thou shouldest die in an hundred years, what wouldst thou say?' Aaron said, 'The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.' *Moses.* 'And if God were to say to thee that thou shouldest die this year, what wouldst thou answer?' *Aaron.* 'The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.' *Moses.* 'And if He were to call thee to-day, what wouldst thou say?' *Aaron.* 'The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works.' 'Then,' said Moses, 'arise and follow me.'

"At that same hour went forth Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar, his son: they ascended unto Mount Hor, and the people looked on, nothing doubting, for they knew not what was to take place. Then said the Most High to His angels, 'Behold the new Isaac: he follows his younger brother, who leads him to death.'

"When they had reached the summit of the mountain, there opened before them a cavern. They went in, and found a death-bed prepared by the hands of angels. Then Moses cried out in grief, 'Woe is me! we were two, when we comforted our sister in her death; in this, thy last hour, I am with thee, to solace thee: when I die, who will comfort me?' Then a voice was heard from heaven, 'Fear not; God Himself will be with thee.'

"On one side stood Moses, on the other Eleazar, and they kissed the dying man on the brow, and took from off him his priestly vestments, to clothe Eleazar, his son, with them. They took off one portion of the sacred apparel, and laid that on Eleazar; and as they stripped Aaron a silvery veil of cloud sank over him like a pall, and covered him. Aaron seemed to be asleep. Then Moses said, 'My brother, what dost thou feel?' 'I feel nothing but the cloud that envelops me,' answered he. After a little pause Moses said again. 'My brother, what dost thou feel?' He answered feebly, 'The cloud surrounds me, and bereaves me of all joy.'

"And the soul of Aaron was parted from his body. And as it went up Moses cried once more, 'Alas, my brother! what dost thou feel?' And the soul replied, 'I feel such joy that I would it had come to me sooner.' Then cried Moses, 'Oh, thou blessed, peaceful death! Oh, may such a death be my lot!'

"Moses and Eleazar came down alone from the mountain, and the people wailed because Aaron was no more. But the coffin of Aaron rose, borne by angels, in the sight of the whole congregation, whilst the angels sang, 'The priest's lips have kept knowledge, and have spoken truth.'"[1]

After a stay of thirty days under the shadow of Mount Hor, in public mourning for Aaron, the camp at last moved southwards, and having rounded the mountains of Edom at the head of the Gulf of Akaba—not to be revisited by Israelitish wanderers till Solomon made Eziongeber the port of his commercial navy—turned northwards towards Canaan. But the way was difficult and trying, and the spirits of the people again fell. Water ran short for the vast multitude, and the manna was murmured at as only "miserable bread."[2] Once more, in forgetfulness of the supply of all their wants for so many years, bitter reproaches rose against God and Moses. But the region itself provided a terrible punishment for such disloyalty and rebellion. Venomous serpents abounded in it, and spread terror and death, till a remedy was provided in the "brazen serpent," raised upon a banner-pole by Moses, by Divine command.[3] A strange confusion of texts has led to the common idea that they were "flying serpents" that thus assailed Israel. But there is not a word in Numbers or Deuteronomy of their being so.[4] It is Isaiah who speaks of "flying serpents,"[5] but without any reference to the incidents of the desert. He perhaps refers to a popular fancy respecting the flying lizard—*draco volans*—which has a membrane between its fore and hind

[1] Baring Gould's *Old Test. Legends*, vol. ii. pp. 127-130.

[2] Num. xxi. 5, light = miserable.

[3] The brazen serpent, it is well known, was used by our Lord Himself as an emblem of His death for mankind (John iii. 14). "Pole" is always = banner-pole. *Englishman's Heb. Concord.*

[4] Num. xxi. 6-8. Deut. viii. 15.

[5] Isa. xiv. 29; xxx. 6.

legs, so that it can glide, like the flying squirrel, from one spot or branch to another; for even in the days of Herodotus these were spoken of as "flying serpents."[1] But they are perfectly harmless, and, besides, are not found in the Negeb, to which the passage relates. He may, however, refer to the springing of the desert snakes, though even this is not necessary to be understood, since the Septuagint translates the word "flying" by "deadly," while the Vulgate substitutes "burning."[2]

It is highly interesting to find that in the very neighbourhood in which Israel was then encamped, travellers mention the existence of serpents in great numbers. Thus, Captain Frazer tells us that "all the Arabs say there are *flying serpents* here, three feet long, very venomous, their bite deadly; they have no wings, but *make great springs*."[3] Mr. Churton, when southwest of the Dead Sea, fell in with a large *red coloured* serpent, which came out of a hollow tree, and was declared by the Arabs to be poisonous.[4] Burckhardt writes: "The sand showed everywhere tracks of these reptiles. My guide told me they were very numerous in these parts, and that the fishermen were in such dread of them, that they put out their fire each night before going to sleep, lest it should attract them." In a similar strain Schubert tells us, that "a large and very mottled snake was brought us, marked with fiery red spots and stripes. From its teeth it evidently belonged to one of the most poisonous kinds. The Bedouins say that these creatures, of which they are in terror, are very numerous in this locality."[5]

[1] Herod., ii. 74; iii. 109.

[2] On the subject, see Gesenius, *Isaia*, pp. 469 ff. Smith's *Dict.*, art. "Serpents." Tristram's *Nat. Hist. of the Bible*. Wilton's *Negeb*.

[3] Forster's *Sinai*, pp. 137, 138.

[4] *Land of the Morning*, p. 130.

[5] Quoted by Bunsen, *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 217.

From this time the trials of wilderness life may be said to have ended. Crossing "the brook Zered," now known as the Wady el Ahsa, at the very south of the Dead Sea, a ravine marked by its abundant vegetation,[1] they left Edom and the desert behind them, and entered on the rich uplands of Moab. They had wanted for nothing during the past, but yet, to reach a region of flowing water, must have put new life into the whole host. The order of the day to cross the brook—"Up and cross the stream Zered!"—was an event so memorable that it was preserved in "the book of the wars of Jehovah," that is, of "the Holy Wars," and has been transcribed thence into the Bible.[2] They could now dig wells and dip their pitchers in fountains. Ere long they reached the tremendous chasm, now known as the Wady Modschib, but then, as that of the Arnon, "the rushing river;" the first stream they had seen since leaving the Nile. Looking across its width of about three miles from crest to crest, and into its depths, over 2,000 feet below, its sides rich with permanent verdure, and floods of bright water sparkling far underneath, the joy, after a long life in the thirsty and barren wilderness, must have been indescribable. They were, also, opposite Engedi, on the other side of the Dead Sea, and could follow the waters in their steep descent down the wild and rich sandstone gorge to the blue waves. They must have crossed, however, far to the east, where the stream is yet inconsiderable, for they had to sink wells to add to the water supply. But the joy of being able to do so, in a country never dry and barren like the desert, was a great event, celebrated in joyous songs, one of which, doubtless commemorating the digging of the first well, known, ages after, as the "Well of

[1] Deut. ii. 13, 14. [2] Deut. ii. 13. Num. xxi. 13-15. *Bibel Urkunden*, vol. i. p. 317.

the Heroes,"[1] by the chiefs of the camp, is happily still preserved.

> Spring up, O well—sing ye to it!
> The well which princes digged,
> Which nobles of the people hollowed out:
> Rulers with their rods of authority
> And with their staves![2]

The arrival in Moab marks, indeed, the first outburst of Hebrew poetry. Ordinary words would no longer suffice to give expression to the joy at entering on fertile regions, and leaving the desert behind them.

Having been expressly forbidden to injure Moab or Ammon, as descendants of Lot,[3] envoys were now sent to the former, as they had been sent to Edom, asking permission to pass quietly through their land, and promising that no injury should be done it. The Hebrews had encamped in the "wilderness of Kedemoth"[4]—a district, on Kiepert's map, about twenty-five miles east of the Dead Sea, and on a line about ten miles south of its head—and remained there till it should be seen what they were to do. Moab having refused to accede to the proposal, the same request was next sent to Ammon, whose territory lay north of Moab, but with no better result.

A great national calamity, however, that had befallen the Ammonites some time before, at last came to the help of Moses. The king of the Amorites, Sihon, "the Destroyer,"[5] had invaded Ammon and Moab, apparently from Canaan, and wrested from them almost the whole country between the Arnon, on the south, and the Jabbok, which flows

[1] Isa. xv. 8. Beer Elim.
[2] Lengerke's *Kenaan*, p. 577. Num. xxi. 17, 18.
[3] Deut. ii. 9; Judg. xi. 17, 18. [4] Deut. ii. 26.
[5] Literally, he who swept all before him.

into the Jordan, on the north; fixing his capital in the strong fortified city of Heshbon, lying about three thousand feet[1] above the level of the Mediterranean, and over four thousand above the Dead Sea, which is visible from it. The Jabbok or Zarka flows in a deep ravine with a winding course: the cliffs on its sides wild and rocky. Ruins of ancient towns dot its course, and there are old canals for irrigation: some of them five or even eight miles long. Heshbon stood on a height rising about two hundred feet above an inland valley, with a brook running past it, the bright pools of which are compared in Canticles to the bright eyes of the Sulamite.[2] The hill is covered with ruins, and all the slopes near are full of caves, once apparently used as dwellings, for the old inhabitants of Palestine were largely Horites—that is, troglodytes, or cave-dwellers. On the hills round there are many ancient stone monuments in the shape of cromlechs, cairns, circles of stones, and the like. The stone circles vary, from a small diameter, to one of forty and even of two hundred feet. Outside this largest circle, which is a double one, cromlechs are so numerous in every direction that twenty-five are still standing, while others have fallen. A cromlech is a monument of two upright stones, with another laid on these, like an altar top. This table-stone, in one case, measured nine by eight feet, and is supported by two great stones which leave a clear space of five feet six inches under the table-stone. A mile away, to the north, there are sixteen more cromlechs, having, like all the others, a view of Heshbon, which was evidently a sacred place: the cromlechs being altars for sacrifices. There are some on the slopes which do not face the old city. All this throws light on the sun-worship of the early

[1] Kiepert's Map. [2] Cant. vii. 4.

inhabitants, for cromlechs were connected with sun-worship.[1]

To Sihon, as to the others, a friendly message was sent from the camp at Kedemoth, asking a passage through his kingdom; but only to meet another refusal. An entrance to Palestine could now only be gained by war, which Moses would fain have avoided; but the result was decisive. Sihon's army fled, and, as later tradition reports, was slaughtered at a spot called Jahaz, "a place trodden down," where they had crowded in an agony of thirst into the bed of a mountain stream. The whole country between the Arnon and the Jabbok, with Heshbon itself, at once passed into the hands of Israel. Henceforward the Arnon was the boundary of their possessions, only the land south of it being left to Moab.[2]

The wanderers were now masters of a wide region of splendid upland pastures, intersected by numerous fertile valleys, and abounding in streams. The crossing of the Arnon and the digging of the first well had already kindled the poetry of the camp; but such a conquest as this was a still more worthy theme for their inspiration. The vast tent city of the host, therefore, soon resounded with songs in praise of the conquerors of Sihon, now returning in triumph. Taunts and derision of their foe mingled in these strains, of which one has happily come down to us.[3]

> 1*st Voice.*—[As if calling to the Amorites in derision.]
> "Come back (will ye not) to Heshbon!
> Build again and restore the city of Sihon![4]

[1] Only some shapeless mounds can be regarded as traces of the city of Sihon. Hewn stones, rude pillars, and cornices of Byzantine work lying around speak of far later times. Besides the caves there are many cisterns, and there are the remains of a colonnaded building on the highest part of a hill, of comparatively late date.

[2] Num. xxi. 15, 26. Deut. iv. 48. [3] Num. xxi. 27–30.

[4] So utterly had it been destroyed that the Israelites themselves had to rebuild it. Num. xxxii. 37.

For there went forth fire from Heshbon,
A flame from the stronghold of Sihon;
It has consumed the city of Moab;
And the lords of the heights of Arnon!"

2*d Voice.*—[As if an Amorite were recounting the former triumph of his people over Moab.]

"Woe to thee, Moab! Thou art undone, thou people of Chemosh.
His sons he has given up as fugitives,
And his daughters into captivity,
To the king of the Amorites—Sihon." [1]

1*st Voice.*—[Telling the final victory of Israel.]

"We have hurled them down! Heshbon has perished even to Dibon! [2]
We have laid them waste even to Nophah
(We have laid them waste) with fire, to Medeba." [3]

The war spirit, now fairly roused, ere long found fresh vent in an expedition northwards under two chiefs, Jair and Nobah, against Og, king of Gilead and Bashan, these rich territories having apparently been seized by the "hill men," by the Amorites, of whom he and Sihon were leaders, on the decline of the Hittites in the Palestine and neighbouring districts, after their long warfare with Rameses II. Even Kadesh on the Orontes is said to have been an Amorite city, under the jurisdiction of Hittites, during the reign of Seti

[1] Their god Chemosh being unable longer to protect them.

[2] Where the Moabite stone was found.

[3] Lengerke and some others see a hint of these early battles in Num. xxi. 14, 15, the words from "what He did" being translated as follows:

"Jehovah took Vaheb by storm,
And the streams of Arnon and the outflowing of the waters,
That turn to the dwellings of Ar,*
And bend themselves to the coasts of Moab." †

* That is, the place from which the waters began to descend toward the Dead Sea. Ar Moab is at the junction of the Arnon and several other streams.

† Lengerke's *Kenaan*, p. 576.

I., the father of Rameses, but the race was not able to withstand the fierce onslaught of the Hebrews, in the flush of their first enthusiasm, under Joshua. The richness of the whole district was itself sufficient attraction for the invaders, for the oaks of Bashan, and the vast herds of wild cattle that roamed its forest glades and green meadows, were its boast and glory, while the landscapes and pastoral wealth of Gilead were hardly less famous. Lovely natural parks, frequent glades covered with heavy crops of wheat and barley, and with trees and shrubs grouped in charming variety; dark forests of sycamore, beech, ilex, the wild fig, and many other trees forming a background which charms the traveller, even now. Nor are the open spaces, which stretch away like English parks, less attractive, for they are green with grass and clover, while lupines, squills, phlox, anemones, cyclamens, and many other flowers delight the eye on every side. In the glades, moreover, one hears the familiar, sweet, clear whistle of the blackbird, the long melodious trill of the nightingale, and the twitter of many kinds of song birds, in the copses overhanging clear streams, to which the roe and the fallow deer come to drink. The great tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, whose hearts delighted in sheep and cattle far more than in agriculture, could not resist such a temptation, and, in league, apparently, with their kindred people, Ammon, soon overcame every difficulty, and made it their own, though not till after a struggle continued for perhaps more than a generation.

The task, indeed, was not an easy one, for Edrei—"the strong"—Og's capital, was in ordinary circumstances almost unassailable, since it was, strange to say, built in a hollow artificially scooped out of the side of a hill, which the deep gorge of the Hieromax or Yarmuk isolates from the country

round. There is no finer scenery in Palestine than the course which this stream has cut, far down between the lofty plateaus on each side, as it rushes in a succession of picturesque cataracts and rapids, between richly green banks to the Jordan, its fall in a few miles being, in one part, not less than two hundred feet. In this district, itself naturally strong, Edrei had been fixed, where the present town of Adraha now stands, but below its site, in the body of the hill. Consul-General Wetzstein and Herr Schumacher have explored this strange city, which is only one of we know not how many similar subterranean cities in these regions. Wetzstein's account is the more vivid, and I quote it. Edrei is on the east side of the hills. The city is entered by stone gates, some of which are still in position, about a yard high and four feet broad, cut in the hill-side. Entering one of these and going down a slope for some time, he came to a dozen rooms, now used as goat-stalls and straw store-houses. The passage became gradually so small that he had to lie down flat and creep along, this continuing for about eight minutes, when he came to a wall several feet high, down which he had to jump. He was now in a broad street, with dwellings on both sides, the height and width leaving nothing to be desired. Nor was there any smell, heat, or difficulty in breathing. After a time came several cross streets over which there were holes to the surface, for air. Next came a market-place, with numerous shops in the walls of a pretty broad street, just like the shops in Palestine towns now. They ran for a long distance. After a while he turned into a side street, with a great hall in it; the roof supported by four pillars. It was one immense slab of jasper, perfectly smooth, and apparently without a crack. The rooms, for the most part, had no supports; the

doors were often made of a single square stone, and there were some fallen columns. After passing some more cross streets, he returned to daylight, having been an hour and a half underground.

Schumacher adds some details: There is a court twenty-six feet long and eight wide, approached by a downward flight of steps, before the actual entrance to the city is reached. Then come slabs of basalt; next, a passage twenty feet long, sloping down to a large room shut off by a stone door. Pillars ten feet high, some more recent than others, bear up the roof of chambers now reached. Then come dark winding passages. The air-holes in the roof go up sixty feet, to the surface, and there are many cisterns in the floor. The average depth of the city below the surface of the hill is about seventy feet. The explorations have been only very partial, and it is clear that much more than has been discovered remains yet unvisited. So long as the air-holes were not found out and closed, such a city, provided with every supply, could have held out against any human foe, till the supplies failed. But how terrible to think of a state of things in which such preparations were demanded, merely to be left free to live in peace!

Yet Kenath, in the district called Argob—"the stony"—was still stronger, for it was built in the crevices of a great island of lava, which had split, in cooling, into innumerable fissures, through whose labyrinth no enemy could safely penetrate. In these were its streets and houses, some of which, of a later date, with stone doors, turning on hinges of stone, remain till this day.

Doors of the same kind are still used in Persia, parts of that country having, till a few years ago, been subject to incessant inroads of Turcomans, who carried off the inhabi-

tants to sell them as slaves at Khiva and Bokhara. Nor were the houses only thus carefully protected. Strong towers were built in the fields, with only a narrow passage into them, built like a chimney, for some distance upwards, so that if the raider sought to follow the intended victim he would have his head battered in as he emerged from the hole through which he had to crawl. Villages and towns, moreover, were sometimes enclosed within a high continuous wall, the only entrance being by a stone door, three feet high, working on stone pivots, and from its small size easily defended from within. One part of the region now assailed by the Hebrews must have given them well-nigh insuperable difficulty—the Ledja, which is perhaps the district known to the invaders as the "Argob," or "stony land." I passed it when in the east and was struck by its truly formidable strength against attack. It is a great triangular plateau of lava, wrinkled and cracked into countless fissures as it cooled. It rises about twenty feet above the plain around, with outlying capes of black lava running here and there, into the fertility around it on every side. The plateau is about twenty-two miles from north to south, and fourteen across: its surface roughened into low waves and pitted by innumerable bubbles, left as the fierce mass cooled. Some wider fissures afford surface for cultivation; the lava in such places, having crumbled into very rich soil, as we see in Sicily, where hollows on the great lava beds near Catania are very fertile. But the cracks over the whole plateau are so countless that although you can look over it you cannot cross it. In old times the labyrinth of passages through it gave protection by turns to peaceful communities and to bands of robbers. Herod was the first to reduce its population to law and order in later times, but after him the

Romans opened a road through it, and put a garrison in it, for whom temples, still standing, were built.

Dr. Porter, of Belfast, discovered in this region, in 1874, a curious city of stone houses, with stone doors, and stone roofs, the circuit of the whole being about two miles, and found, afterwards, that it was only one of many similar towns. Dr. Merrill, moreover, found no fewer than fifteen structures of huge stone, like the base of some larger erection. To Dr. Porter his city appeared a remnant of the gigantic races of primitive Palestine, but it is now known to have been built by Christians of the third and later centuries of our era, as shewn by the Greek inscriptions on their walls. These various extraordinary forms of defence must have been nearly impregnable. It would, indeed, have been perhaps impossible for Israel to overcome a people so strongly intrenched, but for the presence at the time of vast swarms of hornets, a plague common in Palestine, which drove the population into open ground where they could be attacked, as swarms of flies forced Sapor to raise the siege of Nisibis, and as bees are related to have caused the rout of a Babylonian army, and as tradition reports that one of the races of Palestine were driven from their homes by swarms of wasps or hornets.[1] Nor were these the only fastnesses. No fewer than sixty cities, "fenced with high walls, gates, and bars,"[2] had to be taken, but they all fell, sooner or later, before the vigorous assaults of the invaders, and, long afterwards, there might be seen, in the capital of their allies, the Ammonites, one of the trophies of the campaign —the gigantic iron bedstead of King Og, or, as some think, the huge sarcophagus he had prepared for himself, as was the custom with Canaanite kings; if, indeed, it was not, as

[1] Bochart, *Hieros.*, II. pt. 2, chap. 13. [2] Deut. iii. 5.

Major Conder thinks, a stone throne; iron, he tells us, meaning "strong" or "princely," and "bed" meaning a throne. He suggests, from this, that it may have been a name applied to a huge cromlech, from a legend like that which makes giants' seats of similar monuments, in other countries. A single enormous dolmen or cromlech stands alone in a conspicuous position near Rabboth Ammon, its top stone measuring thirteen feet long—or very nearly the nine cubits of Og's bedstead, taking the cubit at sixteen inches—and its breadth eleven feet. He gives the suggestion "for what it is worth," and I leave it to the reader. In a very short time great part of the land east of the Jordan, except that voluntarily left in the hands of their kindred people, Ammon, was in their possession, from Mount Hermon to the Dead Sea.[1]

The terror of the invaders had now spread far and wide—

> "The people heard it and trembled,
> Terror seized the inhabitants of Philistia,
> The tribes of Edom were alarmed;
> The princes of Moab shook with fear;
> All the inhabitants of Canaan despaired,
> Fear and dread fell on them;
> At the greatness of Thine arm,
> They were petrified like a stone."[2]

That the whole of the country east of the Jordan was not conquered at once is, however, evident, from notices of a later date. The complete conquest, like that of the British tribes by the old English, was effected only after generations of warfare. But preparation for the invasion of Western Palestine might forthwith be begun, and, therefore, the camp was pitched, apparently for a long time, in the rich depression of the Jordan, immediately above its entrance into

[1] Deut. iii. 1–17. [2] Exod. xv. 14–16.

the Dead Sea. The heat of the deep valley would be intense, for their tents were pitched from the present Keferein —or Abel Shittim, "the meadow of the acacias"—in the north, its watered and marshy glades marking the northern limits of the rich Ghor or depression of the Jordan bed in its widest breadth—to Beth Jeshimoth, probably Ramah, on the southern desert. It was in these sultry parts that Israel was to fall into the sin of Baal-peor; it was here that Balaam saw them, close behind, from the top of the mountain dedicated to that god.

With such an enemy encamped on its very borders, the terror of Moab, lest all the territory left to it should be overrun, led its king, Balak,—"the spoiler"—since he could not hope to overcome Israel in war, to try ghostly weapons against them. It was a universal belief in antiquity that magic spells and incantations, pronounced against individuals or communities, had an irresistible power. The more famous workers in magic arts were, especially, supposed to know formulæ which nothing could withstand:[1] perhaps the secret name of some god or demon higher than the tutelary divinity of those they were invited to curse. One of these imprecations has fortunately been handed down to us. It runs thus: "Dis-pater, or Jupiter, if thou preferrest that title—or by whatever other name it is lawful to call thee—I conjure thee to fill all this town and army which I name, with flight, terror, and alarm. Baffle the purposes of those armies, enemies, men, cities, or territories which bear arms against us; pouring darkness on them from above. Look on those cities, territories, and persons, and their people, of all ages, as accursed and given over to the conditions, whatever they may be, by which enemies can be most utterly de

[1] See page 377.

voted to destruction. Thus do I devote them, and I, and those whom I represent—the Roman people and their army—stand for witnesses. If thou permittest me and the legions engaged in this matter, to come safely through it, and this doom be accomplished, I swear to sacrifice to thee, O Mother Earth, and to thee, O Jupiter, three black sheep."[1] It is also recorded by Plutarch, that before Crassus started on his fatal campaign against the Parthians, "Ateius, running to the gate, when Crassus was come thither, set down a chafing-dish with lighted fire in it, and burning incense and pouring libations on it, cursed him with dreadful imprecations, calling upon and naming several strange and horrible deities. For the Romans believe that there is so much virtue in these sacred and ancient rites, that no man can escape the effects of them, and that the utterer himself seldom prospers; so that they are not often used, and only on a great occasion."[2] In the Burmese wars of our own time, moreover, the generals of that nation had several magicians with them, who repeatedly cursed our troops; a number of witches being added when the imprecations already made had failed.

Filled with a similar belief in the efficacy of such means of destroying an enemy, Balak sent off in hot haste for a soothsayer of great fame, who lived at Pethor, a town often mentioned in the inscriptions of Shalmanezer II., on the Upper Euphrates, to the north of Nineveh and the east of Carchemish, in the land of the Chatti or Hittites, hoping that his incantations might deliver over Israel to Moab as an easy prey, and that it thus might not only save what remained of its territory, but perhaps regain the lands taken from Sihon and Og, which had formerly belonged to it.

Bileam, or Balaam, "the devourer"—perhaps of books—

[1] Macrobii, *Saturnal.*, lib. iii. cap. 9. [2] Plutarch, iii. 350, Crassus.

was an Aramæan by birth, and came from the region where the descendants of Abraham still cherished, more or less purely, the faith of the patriarch; so that he had learned to know of Jehovah from his own people. That he should have shewn himself a true prophet, though not of the race of Israel, illustrates the cheering fact that the presence of God has never been limited exclusively to the Church, but that even among the heathen He reveals His Spirit. The characteristics of the inspiration granted him are identical with those of the prophets of Israel. God visits him in the night, or he falls into a trance in which he hears Divine words, and sees prophetic visions, while he lies, as if in a swoon, on the earth; the world around shut out from his consciousness, but his soul awake to the secret communications of the divine, and his spiritual eye open to the revelations vouchsafed him. His character has always been an enigma. No fidelity could have been more signal than that which he displays to Jehovah, when the Divine purpose to bless Israel is made known. No persuasion, or prospect of reward, can move him to go with Balak's messengers, till God permits him, and no considerations of danger or advantage make him falter in uttering the very words he is commissioned to deliver. Yet St. Peter tells us that he held the truth in unrighteousness,[1] and in Joshua[2] he is called a kosēm—or "diviner"—a word only used of false prophets.[3] It may be

[1] 2 Pet. ii. 15. [2] Josh. xiii. 22.

[3] *Kesem*, "the divination of a false prophet." The enchantments used against Israel are called Nahash, a word referring to the whispering or muttering of sorcerers, like that of serpents.

Kalisch gives the highest character to Balaam (*Bib. Studies*, vol. i. "Balaam"), but Lengerke shrewdly notes that for one with his knowledge and belief in God, even to have *thought* of cursing Israel, marks an unworthy nature. He adds, "That Jehovah first permitted, then forbade, then again permitted the journey, is only a human way of expressing the Divine relations to men's thoughts, for 'God cannot repent' (chap. xxiii. 19). The meaning is that God was opposed, not to the journey, but to the crafty greed which impelled Balaam to it." *Kenaan*, p. 584.

that, although sincere in his worship of Jehovah, he joined with it too much heathen superstition; and that, while afraid to go against Him, he was yet only too willing in his heart to do so. "He was one of those unstable men," says an old writer, "whom the Apostle calls 'double-minded'—an ambidexter in religion, like Redwald, king of the East Saxons, the first who was baptized; who, as Camden relates, had, in the same church, one chapel for the Christian religion, and another for sacrificing to devils. A loaf of the same leaven was our resolute Rufus, who painted God on one side of his shield and the devil on the other, with the desperate inscription in Latin—'I am ready for either.'"[1]

In the narrative itself it would almost seem as if this double character might be traced. Nothing can be loftier than the words in which he replies to Balak, when the agonized king, in their meeting, asks him,[2] "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" In accordance with the terrible custom of his country,[3] he was ready, if required, to sacrifice even his eldest son, if it would appease the Divine wrath. Not even the greatest of the old prophets could have given a purer and more spiritual answer to this wild, despairing appeal. "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

[1] Ness, *History and Mystery*, vol. i. app. p. 88.
[2] Mic. vi. 5. [3] 2 Kings iii. 27.

Yet he enters heartily, to all appearance, into the idolatrous spirit of everything round him. He feasts on the flesh of beasts offered to heathen gods, and chooses as the spot on which he builds his first altars, one consecrated to the worship of Baal.[1] He appears, moreover, to have agreed with Balak in the thoroughly heathen notion that a spell would work from one spot better than from another; and, even in the number of his altars and sacrifices, acts as if he trusted to the magic power of sacred numbers. The Hebrews had only one altar at a given place, but Balaam causes seven to be built together, and offers seven sacrifices—just as, at this day, in India, the number seven generally appears in the sacrifices or offerings of the Hindoos. If poor they will offer seven nuts, limes, plantains, or betel-nuts, or seven measures of rice; or, if they cannot go so high, will at least take care to have an odd number.[2] Nor is this the only analogy with heathen customs. "When an Indian king goes forth to battle," we are told, "he makes a sacrifice to the goddess of the royal family, to learn his prospects in the coming struggle, and to bring down a curse on his enemy. For this purpose seven altars are placed in front of the temple, and near them seven vessels filled with water, on each of which are mango leaves, and a cocoa-nut with its tuft. Near each altar is a hole containing fire. The victims, which may be seven, fourteen, or twenty-one, and consist of buffaloes, rams, or cocks, are then brought forward, and a strong man strikes off the head of each victim at a blow; after which the carcass is thrown into the burning pit, with prayers and incantations. The priest then proceeds to the temple and offers incense, returning after some time and declaring with frantic gestures, what will be the result of the

[1] Num. xxii. 41; xxiii. 1. [2] Roberts' *Oriental Illustrations.*

battle. Should the response be favourable to the inquiring prince, the priest then takes some of the ashes from each hole, and throwing them in the direction of the enemy, pronounces on him the most terrible imprecations." [1]

The story as recorded in Numbers is one of striking interest. The two journeys of the messengers of the civilized Moab and of the Bedouin Midian, to the distant Euphrates, for help against the mighty host, described in the imagery natural to a pastoral race, as now "licking up all that were round about them, as the ox licks up the grass of the field" [2] —the hesitation—the tardy consent to come—the terrible apparition by the way,[3] all serve to excite and engage the imagination. The first meeting of Balak and the seer is equally impressive. Messengers, running breathless before, announce that the great man is approaching, and forthwith the king, to do him honour, and to hurry him towards the people he wished to curse, before they advanced to the attack, sets out from his capital, Rabbah [4]—"the great city" —on the uplands, about twenty miles back from the south-west corner of the Dead Sea—and goes north to the gorge of the Arnon, on the edge of his territory. Thence they pass at once to Kirjath-huzoth [5]—"street-fort," or "Strasburg" —on the southern slopes of the range of Attarus, close to the camp of Israel. Next morning, seven sacrifices are offered on the neighbouring "heights of Baal," whence Balaam looks down on part at least of the Hebrew host, and thence he delivers his first words: "I cannot curse those

[1] Roberts' *Oriental Illustrations.*

[2] Num. xxii. 4.

[3] Maimonides and Hengstenberg, among others, thought the incident happened in a dream or trance. The *Speaker's Commentary*, vol. i. p. 737, thinks that Balaam, an an augur, gave a meaning, according to his art, to the natural sounds of the ass, or to some special noise made by it.

[4] Rabbah = "the capital."

[5] Num. xxii. 39.

whom God does not curse. They are a people dwelling apart from other nations, under the special care of God, and are destined to swell to countless multitudes." The amazed and disappointed king hurries him, successively, to the bare top of Pisgah and the summit of Peor "that looketh towards the waste," over which, beyond the "acacia meadows," the tents of Israel stretched afar, in hopes of more favourable oracles, but only to be each time more bitterly mocked. At each point the landscape furnishes the theme of the various utterances. The great desert, at both, reaches on the east away to the Euphrates. To the south are the red mountains of Edom; across the Dead Sea the cliffs of Engedi, the future home of the Kenites;[1] the "Wilderness of the South" spreads out in the background—the home of Amalek, the first enemy of Israel; beneath, in "the meadows of the acacias"—the rich plains of the eastern Jordan valley, as distinguished from the cultivated "fields" of the table-land above—lies the vast encampment of Israel; and far away to the west, beyond the hills of Palestine, is, as he knows, the Great Sea, from whose bosom rise the "isles of Chittim," and whose waters wash the shores of the lands of the future. The language of the prophet, when "he heard the words of God, and saw the vision of the Almighty," while prostrate in a trance, but having the eyes of his mind and spirit open, are well said by Herder to show a wonderful dignity, compression, vividness and fulness of imagery.[2] He sees in thought the home of Israel in Canaan, with its sweeping valleys, marked in winter by rushing streams;[3]

[1] Major Conder proposes to identify their seat with the steep cliff of Yekin, which dominates the desert plateau west of the Dead Sea, and is one of the most conspicuous objects against the sky line, looking from the mountain summits on which Balaam stood. *Pal. Fund Reports*, Jan., 1881, p. 37.

[2] *Geist d. Ebr. Poesie*, vol. ii. p. 221.

[3] Nachal.

its plains spreading out, in wide verdure, like the gardens on the banks of his native Euphrates,[1] adorned with the perfumed and precious aloe-tree, and the stately cedar. It has waters above and beneath—the rains and the springs. The pitcher is dipped into its flowing brooks, and the husbandman scatters his seed in sure expectation of abundant showers.

Its enemies all conquered, it will lie down like a mighty lion, which no one dares rouse. Hereafter, but "not now," a Star will come out of Jacob—bright as those of his eastern skies—and a sceptre "rise out of Israel," and "smite in pieces both sides of Moab," and destroy its warriors. One by one, he sees the kingdoms around fall before the people of God—language realized first in the triumphs of David, but still more grandly in those of the greater Star that, like him, should rise out of Bethlehem. From Israel his vision passes to his own distant Assyria, which is destined to carry off the Kenite to captivity, from his strongholds in the rocks of Engedi. But, now, terror seizes the prophet, for the doom of all others was at last to fall on his native land: "Who shall live," cries he, "when God doeth this"—for ships shall come over the western seas, and overcome "Assur and Eber"—the races beyond the Euphrates—and they, also, shall perish for ever. A wondrous glance at the time when the arms of the West broke up the great Asiatic kingdoms for ever.[2]

Examined in detail, many points in the story of Balaam's relations with Balak are full of interest. The "high places," which were literally hills, to which Balaam was brought by the king, were three in number, each sacred to a Moabite

[1] Nahar.
[2] Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 192. Lengerke's *Kenaan*, pp. 586 ff.

god and commanding a wide view over the Jordan valley. Bamoth Baal—"the heights of Baal"—was south of Nebo, and was a bare hill-top, from which only a part of the Promised Land could be seen. The Field of Zophim, the second, was part of the ridge leading up to Nebo, from the north, now called "Sufa." More exactly, it seems to have been the open space close to the flat top of Nebo, which is crowned by a ruined cairn. The third was "the cliff of Peor that looketh toward Jeshimon," from which, apparently, the whole host of Israel was to be seen, in the plains of Abel Shittim and the Acacia Meadows. Thus the first was the hill of Baal, the Sun-god; the second, that of Nebo, or Mercury; the third, of Peor, the Priapus of Moab, with an obscene symbol and obscenity for his worship. At each site seven altars were raised, one to each of the seven planetary gods, to secure the aid of all against the God of Israel. Peor is believed to have been a ridge immediately south of that of Bamoth Baal, the name Minyeh, which is like that of Meni or Venus, the wife of Peor, being still connected with it. Here, strange to say, on the very edge of the cliff, seven stone monuments were found, formed of large stones; the Arabs knowing nothing of them but that they were very ancient. A circle has existed in each case, with a central cubical stone, such as the ancient Arabs consecrated to their chief female divinity, and each had once an enclosure on the east, where the worshipper faced the west, which was sacred, in the rosy twilight, to Venus—the Hathor of Egypt. Close to "Zophim" stands a dolmen, perfect and unshaken; others are found on the southern slope, while another, overturned, is on the west, close to the Cairn of Nebo, and a great stone circle and another dolmen are on the other side of the gorge, to the south. Balaam was taken to a region filled with these

rude altars. Conder is justified in asking if these altars erected by Balak, may not be the very ones he has discovered.[1]

But though not allowed to curse Israel, he found means to injure it. The worship of Baal by the Midianites was accompanied by licentious rites frequent in the religions of antiquity, and to these the Israelites, who had been friendly with Midian in the wilderness, were invited, at Balaam's suggestion.[2] Repeating the sin of their fathers at Sinai, after the heathen feast of the golden calf, they abandoned themselves to the impurity that followed that of Baal.

Idolatry, thus, once more threatened to infect the chosen people, after all the efforts of Moses to free them from it by long seclusion from other races, in the wilderness. In vain were the most stern commands issued by Moses to slay every transgressor, and hang up his dead body for a warning. A plague broke out, of which 24,000 died, and brought a multitude, weeping, to the door of the Tabernacle, but the offence was not finally ended till the zeal of Phinehas, a grandson of Aaron, spread profound terror into the hearts of all. But the greatness of the crime and depth of the fall, on the part of the people, dwelt in the memory of successive generations, for even after hundreds of years we find Hosea reminding his contemporaries how God found Israel—

> "Like grapes in the wilderness,
> Like the first ripe figs in spring;
> But they went to Baal-peor,
> They consecrated themselves to that shameful idol,
> And became abominations like their love."[3]

[1] Conder's *Heth and Moab*, 145–146. [2] Num. xxxi. 16.

[3] Hos. ix. 10. In Ps. cvi. 28, it is said, "They joined themselves unto Baal-peor and ate the sacrifices of the dead" that is, of dead idols, as contrasted with the living God. See Num. xxv. 2. Hitzig, Ewald, Kay, Lengerke, Olshausen, Moll.

So great a catastrophe, kindling such indignation and shame amongst those zealous for Jehovah, naturally resulted in a religious war against Midian, its author. Instead of a mere soldier, Phinehas, the priest, took the command, and the Ark preceded the host, amidst the blast of the sacred trumpets. Nothing could stand before the impetuous attack. An immense slaughter of the Midianites followed; the five chiefs of its tribes, and Balaam, the great Eastern prophet, falling amidst the slain,[1] and the assailants securing a huge booty in cattle and slaves. But the friendship which had existed between Midian and Israel was broken off for many generations.

Bashan and Gilead, which lay as yet unappropriated, were specially adapted for a pastoral rather than an agricultural population. Hence, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half of Manasseh, who still retained their love of the old shepherd life of their ancestors,[2] set their hearts on obtaining it from Moses, and in the end did so, though only on the condition that they should join their brethren in the approaching invasion of Western Palestine. The part assigned to Reuben stretched from the deep chasm of the Arnon, north, to a line with the head of the Dead Sea; Gad secured the region from the limits of Reuben's territory to the Jabbok, across the whole breadth of the country, and

[1] The women captives slain were those who had taken part either then or formerly in the rites of Baal-peor, which required all, after a certain age, to surrender themselves to the impurities of the worship. The aggregate number of cattle captured was 675,000 sheep, 72,000 beeves, and 61,000 asses. Thirty-two thousand maidens also were taken, and golden chains, bracelets, and ear-rings, to the weight, in all, of 16,750 shekels. (Num. xxxi.)

[2] That these tribes alone still clung to the Arab life of their forefathers implies, as before said, that the others had adopted a settled life in Egypt. Agriculture had been the rule then with the Hebrews. See Exod. i. 14; xvi. 3. Num. xi. 5. Deut. xi. 10. Either as slaves or otherwise, the "service of the field" had become general, as it afterwards was in Palestine. The example of Isaac and Jacob had, in fact, changed the race from shepherds to farmers.

also a strip along the east side of the Jordan, to the Sea of Chinnereth,[1] better known as the Lake of Galilee. Thence to the foot of Lebanon was made over to Manasseh.

Seen from the western hills, this whole region forms a high table-land facing the west as a wall of purple mountain, with a singularly horizontal outline. But, on a nearer approach, the flat outline breaks into hill and valley in the northern parts, and in the southern into deep ravines and gorges, through which the waters of the uplands make their way to the Jordan and the Dead Sea. The general level, however, rises high above that of the sea—Heshbon being 3,000 feet above it; Rabbah of Ammon, 2,770; Gerasa, 1,800; and Bozrah, 2,970.[2] The territory of Reuben is still esteemed beyond all others by the Arab sheepmasters, and bears the special name of "Mishor,"[3] that is, level downs, marking a country free from rocks and stones, in contrast with the rough and bare rocks of the western hills. It is a wide expanse of rolling pastures, covered with short smooth turf, which, in its season, springs into one vast waving ocean of grass, stretching away to the wastes of the far eastern desert. Here the king of Moab, in later times, found it easy to raise his yearly tribute to Israel of 100,000 lambs, and 100,000 rams with the wool. In such a district the Reubenites could multiply their flocks without limit. But the result was fatal to the tribe. Preferring tent life, it gradually sank into so many Arab encampments. No

[1] Derived by some from Kinnoor—a harp; from its shape. Gennesareth comes from it by a change of letters frequent in the East.

[2] Conder's *Map*.

[3] Mishor = level downs; hence it is applied to a country without rock or stone. It is the special name of the upland pastures east of the Jordan. Thus "all the cities of the Mishor" (Deut. iii. 10). "The Mishor of the Reubenites" (Deut. iv. 43). "The Mishor of Medeba" (Josh. xiii. 9, 16). "All her cities that are in the Mishor" (ver. 17). See also Josh. xx. 8, where plain = Mishor, as in 1 Kings xx. 23, 25; 2 Chron. xxvi. 10; Jer. xxi. 13; xlviii. 8, 21.

judge, prophet, or hero from it has come down to us, nor did it take any part in the great crises of national history. Distance, the difference of occupations, and the exposure to Arab and heathen influences, gradually estranged its sons from their western brethren. They lingered among their sheepfolds, and preferred the shepherd's life, and the bleating of the flocks, to the sound of the trumpet, or the danger of battle, when appealed to for their help; contenting themselves with idly debating the matter by the side of their streams.[1] "Unstable as water, they never excelled,"[2] but ere long faded away from distinct individuality as a tribe. Disputes with desert Arabs, forays from which they drove off myriads of camels, asses, and cattle, are their only annals. Preferring the tent to the town, they did not even retain the religion of their western brethren, but in the end gave themselves up "to the gods of the people of the land, whom God destroyed before them."[3]

The territory of Gad embraced great part of Gilead—a region, as I have already said, of surpassing beauty and fertility. Graceful hills, broad valleys, and luxuriant herbage are, indeed, its most striking feature, for it is much like Bashan, which, as already noticed, gloried in its mighty oaks and in the vast herds of wild cattle in its forests. The country is, in fact, surpassingly beautiful in its verdant richness and variety. Lovely knolls and dells open at every turn; winding streamlets fringed with oleanders or sparse oaks and herbage glitter in the sun, the branches vocal with the song of birds. Rising to the higher ground, you canter through a noble forest of oaks, then ride for a mile or two past luxuriant green corn, from which the peasant women are, perhaps, hoeing out thistles. Men are ploughing and

[1] Judg. v. 15, 16. [2] Gen. xlix. 4. [3] 1 Chron. v. 25.

preparing for cotton planting; their long firelocks piled in the centre of the field, to be rushed to on the slightest alarm. Thence you may ride for some time through a rich forest of scattered olive trees, left untrained or uncared for, but often with corn in the open glades, across another little wady, and wind up its steep sides till you reach again a rolling plain or thin forest, or a fertile expanse of corn.[1]

The want of marked character shown by Reuben could not be attributed to Gad, whose typical heroes, the eleven who swam the Jordan to join David at the lowest ebb of his fortunes, were fitting representatives of the tribe. "Strong men of might, men of war for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler; their faces were like the faces of lions, and like roes upon the mountains for swiftness."[2] But the history of the tribes will be more fittingly noticed as our narrative proceeds.

To the half of Manasseh was assigned the northern part of the conquered Amorite territory which it had mainly won; for the Manassites at this time were certainly the most warlike of the tribes. Machir, Jair, and Nobah, its chiefs, were not shepherds, like the Reubenites, but valiant warriors, whose deeds are frequently recorded.[3] It was Jair who took all the tract of Argob, with its sixty great cities; and Nobah who took Kenath and its dependencies; and we are told that because Machir was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan.[4] These districts, as we have seen, were the most difficult in the whole country, for they embraced the hills of Gilead, and the almost impregnable tract known as the Ledjah, or "refuge," from the security which its natural fortifications afforded. But Manasseh

[1] Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 468.
[2] 1 Chron. xii. 8.
[3] Num. xxxii. 39. Deut. iii. 13–15.
[4] Josh. xvii. 1.

also, like Reuben and Gad, affected by its position and its isolation, gradually fell into the wandering shepherd life, and ceased to be a power in Israel. Nor did it even remain true to its ancient faith, but, like the other tribes of the east of Jordan, gave itself up to the local idolatry.[1]

A new census of the people which was now taken showed an aggregate, in all the tribes, of 601,730 men. This, with the revision of his laws, was apparently the last public act in the life of Moses. He was now at the close of his magnificent career, for it was not fitting that his glory as the great prophet, should be confused with that of a conqueror, by his leading the people over the Jordan. But, before he left them, his loving spirit broke out once more, as the father of Israel, in farewell addresses which breathe the highest spirit of poetry. In one he utters a strain intended to animate them to the contest on which they were entering; in a second he gives his blessing to the separate tribes; and in the third he leaves them the legacy of the song known specially by his name. In this last, it is noticeable that he nine times speaks of God as *The Rock*—a name which only Sinai and the desert could have suggested; and the pastoral riches he promises are such as only the eastern side of the Jordan afforded—"the butter of kine, the milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat kidneys of wheat"[2]—incidental proofs of the authenticity of the composition.

But his time had come. "His eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated," yet he had finished his work. A new era was opening, for which another was the fit leader. He was now, himself, to enter on his reward. But, before departing to his rest, a glimpse was to be granted him of the

[1] 1 Chron. v. 25. [2] Deut. xxxii. 13, 14.

goodly land into which his people were about to pass. Climbing "from the plains of Moab," the sunken level of the Ghor, on the edge of the Jordan, "to the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho, the Lord shewed him" the future inheritance of his race.

On the lofty hills overlooking the mouth of the Jordan, every condition is met for the story of both Balaam and Moses. The Hebrew leader was in the Shittim plain when commanded to ascend Nebo. If we suppose he started from the neighbourhood of Tel-er-Ramé, his road would be by Ayûn Musa, and up the flanks of Jebel Siâghah to its top, and thence to the summit of Nebo, where he met his fate. He would instinctively turn westward at each winding of the road, and look back over the Shittim plain where the great host was encamped; at the green poplars and willows of the Jordan banks, with the silvery water flashing in places through their dense foliage, then across to the glaring desolate rocks of the Judæan wilderness; as he rose higher and higher he would discover the green hills of Palestine. When he reached the bold headland of Siâghah he would linger to take in the wonderful foreground in which the whole host would now be visible, the northern third of the Dead Sea, the Jordan valley, to the cleft, at the bottom of which he knew lay the Sea of Tiberias. Neither from this point, however, nor from the top of Nebo, which is three hundred and fifty feet higher, could he literally see the Mediterranean. The including of the Great Sea in the prospect must be taken in the same sense as his seeing all the land.

Mount Nebo is two thousand six hundred and forty-three feet above the Mediterranean, and thus stands much lower than the central hills of Moab, which rise from twenty-five

hundred to three thousand feet above it. It takes its name from that of a Babylonian god—the word coming from the same root as the Hebrew "nebi," a prophet, and its meaning is "the proclaimer" or the "prophet," since the god Nebo was, essentially, the proclaimer or prophet of the mind and wishes of the great god Merodach. He was also the god of science and literature, and was honoured as the author of writing—the wise one—the Scribe, and the patron of the literary class. His worship extended through Assyria as well as Babylonia, and passed thence to the distant Semitic nations of Western Asia; the names of places in Palestine showing that he was adored by Canaanites as well as in Moab. Cities bearing the name stood within the territories of both Reuben and Judah, and when literature rose among the Hebrews they substituted "nebi," "the prophet," for the old word "roeh," "the seer."[1] The ridge of Mount Nebo runs out west from the plateau of Moab, sinking gradually. The word Nebo, which among its other meanings has that of a knob or tumulus, applies to the flat top of the ridge, which is crowned by a ruined cairn. Sufa—the Zophim of the Bible—is the ascent leading up to the ridge from the north, and the field of Zophim is, no doubt, the field close to the cairn of Nebo—a broad brown field of arable land. The name Pisgah no longer survives in the locality, but it seems to have been only another name for the Nebo ridge. The view from the top is very striking. To the eastward, the ridge slopes gently for two or three miles, and then, sweeping forth, rolls in one boundless plain, stretching far into Arabia, till lost in the horizon; one waving ocean of corn and grass. As the eye turns southward, the peak of Jebel Shihan first stands out behind Jebel Atta-

[1] Sayce's *Hibbert Lectures*, 120.

rus. Beyond and behind these, a long ridge shuts up the view at a distance of about five miles. Turning westward, the landscape sinks in two or three lines of gigantic terraces as it descends to the Dead Sea, which lies beneath, like a strip of molten metal. Far beyond it the ridge of Hebron can be traced. Northward lies the deep bed of the river Jordan, with the site of Israel's last camp. Beyond the river rises the top of Gerizim, and, farther still, beyond the plain of Esdraelon, rise the hills of Lower Galilee, but Carmel is hidden by an intervening height, close to the Jordan Valley. Northwards, the eye catches the outline of Tabor and Gilboa. Snowy Hermon, mantled with cloud, and the highest range of Lebanon behind it, are beyond the horizon, while the hills of Central Palestine, being as high as Nebo, or higher, shut out the view of the Mediterranean.

A sight of this magnificent panorama having been vouchsafed the great leader, the hour came when he should depart. Somewhere in the Abarim range, on the summit dedicated to the god Nebo, he took his last look at the land he was not to enter; seeing much, but knowing that, even beyond the magnificent sweep of that wide landscape, there lay still more that must be hidden for ever from his eyes. From that height he came down no more; but when he died or where he was buried was known to none, lest his tomb might become a centre of idolatrous pilgrimage. As in life, so in death, self was nothing, his duty all. Josephus, though writing from imagination, could not be in material error when he says, that "he withdrew among the tears of the people; the women beating their breasts, and the children giving way to uncontrollable wailing. At a certain point in his ascent he made a sign to the weeping multitude to advance no farther, taking with him only the elders, the

high priest Eleazar, and the general, Joshua. At the top of the mountain he dismissed the elders, and then, as he was embracing Eleazar and Joshua, and still speaking to them, a cloud suddenly stood over him and he vanished in a deep valley."[1]

It was a fitting tribute to such a man that Israel publicly lamented his loss for thirty days. They naturally felt themselves like orphans. He had not only raised them from a horde of slaves to a nation, but had given them a creed and institutions which would for ever secure for them a distinct national existence. As the prophet of God he had made them the depositaries of truths unknown to the world besides; the possession of which would make them the benefactors of all ages. His laws and morals were destined to mould them to an ideal only to be surpassed by the revelations of Christianity. His sympathy with his charge had been sublime. He could say of himself, that he had borne them as a nurse bears a child. His patience and hopefulness with them had been wonderful. His gentleness, and self-oblivion, had given him supreme authority and reverence. He could boast before them that he had taken nothing from any one, and that he had injured none. His utter freedom from all littleness of soul had been shown by his wishing that all Israelites were prophets like himself. In all respects, indeed, he had been a man apart from his fellows, and immeasurably above them, and the remembrance that such an one had stood at the cradle of their infant nation gave all its following generations a grand impulse to a noble life.[2]

The legends of the death of Moses are too lengthy to be

[1] Jos., *Ant.*, IV. viii. 48.

[2] See Graetz, vol. i. pp. 57, 58, for an estimate of the character of Moses.

given in full, but the conclusion of one of them may be quoted. "And when he had gone up the mountain," says one portion, "he met three men who were digging a grave, and he asked them, 'For whom do you dig this grave?' They answered, 'For a man whom God will call to be with Him in Paradise.' Moses asked leave to help in digging the grave of such a holy man. When it was completed, he asked, 'Have you taken the measure of the deceased?' 'No. But he was of thy size; lie down in it.' Moses did so. The three men were the angels Michael, Gabriel, and Sagsagel. The angel Michael had begun the grave, the angel Gabriel had spread the white napkin for the head, the angel Sagsagel that for the feet. Then the angel Michael stood on one side of Moses, the angel Gabriel on the other side, and the angel Sagsagel at the feet, and the majesty of God appeared above his head.

"And the Lord said to Moses, 'Close thine eyelids,' and he obeyed. Then the Lord said, 'Press thy hand upon thy heart,' and he did so. Then God said, 'Place thy feet in order,' and he did so. Then the Lord God addressed the spirit of Moses, and said, 'Holy soul, my daughter, for a hundred and twenty years hast thou inhabited this undefiled body of dust. But now thine hour is come, go forth and mount to Paradise.' But the soul answered, trembling and with pain, 'In this pure and undefiled body have I spent so many years that I love it, and I have not the courage to desert it.' 'My daughter,' replied God, 'come forth! I will place thee in the highest heaven, beneath the cherubim and seraphim who bear up My eternal throne.' Yet the soul doubted and quaked. Then God bent over the face of Moses and kissed him. And the soul leaped up in joy, and went with the kiss of God to Paradise. Then a sad cloud

draped the heavens, and the winds wailed, 'Who lives now on earth to fight against sin and error?' And a voice answered, 'Such a prophet never arose before.' And the Earth lamented, 'I have lost the holy one.' And Israel lamented, 'We have lost the Shepherd.' And the angels sang, 'He is come in peace to the arms of God.'"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN.

The state of Palestine in the days of Thothmes III. has been described from the Egyptian records, in earlier pages, and fortunately some aids may be obtained from the same sources for learning its state, and that of the districts north and south of it, when Israel was about to invade it. A letter of an Egyptian military officer of high rank, "master of the Captains of Egypt," dating from the later years of Rameses II., "the Oppressor," has reached our times, and contains some curious information. He travelled as far north as Aleppo, by way of the Hittite city of Kadesh, on the Orontes, riding all the way in a chariot, which no one, for want of passable roads, could do now, and on his way, going or returning, visited many towns of Phœnicia, including Gebal, where there was a famous temple to Ashtaroth; Beyrout, Sidon, Sarepta, and Tyre, and went also to the Bedouin encampments outside Palestine, to the Jordan, to Megiddo, Joppa, Raphia, and Gaza, besides many other places of which the names used by him are not yet identified. He travels with chariots, the horses of which are as swift as jackals, with flashing eyes, and rushing like the burst of a hurricane, he himself driving his own chariot: his bow and other arms, ready for defence, fixed at the back of it. The rivers and torrents have to be forded everywhere, and there seem to be no bridges. Huge forests of

cypresses, oaks, and cedars, presumably in Lebanon, reach to heaven and darken the sky, and lions, wolves, and hyenas are numerous. The roughness of the tracks which serve as roads terribly exhausts him. At one halt a thief creeps into the place where he sleeps, to get at which he has to pass through the part in which his horses are tethered, and carries off his clothes. To add to the trouble, his body-slave, roused by the entrance of the thief, joins him, takes what is left, and runs off to the Bedouin. Soon after, a set of robbers, "of the enemy," plunder him of his baggage. At Tyre, he finds that water is carried to the city, on its island, in boats. One city he orders, from some unknown reason, to be set in flames, adding that a "Mohar's office is a very painful one." At one part he comes to a gorge three thousand feet deep, full of rocks and rolling stones, the worst of travelling for his chariot. He has to force its owner, by threats, to give him a camel, for food. He passes through parts in which he has no guide, and does not know the way, and feels his hair bristling up in his anxiety. The track is full of rocks and stones, with no path fit for his chariot; it is moreover choked with hollies, Indian figs, aloes, and bushes. On one side is the mountain, rising in a perpendicular wall; on the other a precipice. The chariot, as is no wonder, strikes the rocks, the horses are thrown down, the reins broken, the chariot pole broken also; the wreck is total, and the horses have to be taken on by themselves. The gardens at Joppa, however, revive his spirits, but he soon has more trouble. The "enemy" has been so close behind him, that he quaked, before reaching Joppa, but soon after leaving it a robber steals his bow, dagger, and quiver. Next his reins are cut in the night, and the horses run off. Having caught them again, however, or found others,

he starts again, but his slave at a bad piece of the track breaks the chariot in pieces and leaves him in a great difficulty. He is in a strait to get food and water, on the strength of which to reach a place of safety. Meanwhile the shattered chariot is taken to the forge, and the workers in wood, metals, and leather are set to work to repair it. They put in a new pole, supply new fittings, new leather work on the harness, make a new yoke, and new metal ornaments, and mend his whip—so that all the trades implied in such varied requirements must have flourished in Palestine in those days. Thus set to rights again, he was able to set off once more, on his journey to Egypt.

The object of his wide travels is not told us, though it is clear that he was regarded by the people, through whose lands he passed, with very unfriendly eyes. Thothmes III. had annexed no fewer than a hundred and nineteen towns in Palestine, to his Egyptian empire, two centuries before, and the Pharaoh was still, apparently, lord paramount in the regions visited by the "Mohar," his officer. After the long reign of Rameses, however, the strength of Palestine must have greatly declined. The long wars between that great king and the Syrian Hittites, with their confederates in Canaan, must have greatly weakened the local chiefs and kings, and Egypt itself had evidently lost its hold on them before Joshua's campaigns, else he would have had to do battle with Egyptian garrisons, which are not mentioned in the Scripture narrative. They had been stationed in many towns of Palestine at an earlier day, and must now have been withdrawn, perhaps from the disasters of the reign of Menephtah, under whom the Exodus took place. Rameses had brought back a varied and rich spoil from Palestine, for he, himself, tells us that it included

gold, glass, gums, cattle, male and female slaves, ivory, ebony, boats laden with all good things, horses, chariots inlaid with gold and silver, or painted; goblets, dishes, iron, steel, dates, oil, wine, asses, cedar, suits of armour, fragrant wood, war galleys, incense, gold dishes with handles, collars and ornaments of lapis lazuli, silver dishes, vases of silver, precious stones, honey, goats, lead, spears of brass, colours, beer, bread, geese, fruit, milk, pigeons—the plunder, in fact, of a rich and civilized country. The meadows of Palestine, its fortresses, its groves, and its orchards are mentioned, showing that prosperity of every kind abounded.[1] There had been cities, and landowners, traders, architects, and workers in metals in Canaan at a time when the Hebrews were living in Egypt or in the desert, and the Hittites, long before Joshua, had almost equalled the Egyptians in culture and power. But the very list of plunder given by Rameses implies a terrible drain on the wealth and prosperity of the land as a whole, for it indicates only one of the smallest details in the waste and ruin caused by repeated and sanguinary wars. The experiences of the Mohar, on his journey, moreover, show a prevailing lawlessness and disorder which hint at a time of confusion and decay. The way would be opened, however, by this political feebleness, for the invasion of the Hebrews, though, even with this in their favour, the difficulties to be overcome by a force like theirs, of footmen only, and these perhaps rudely armed, must have been immense. Their wilderness life, outside the communities of men, must have left them only a very partial equipment to meet armed forces like those they had to encounter. It was no savage or

[1] Lepsius, *Denkmäler*, Abth. iii. Bl. 30a, 30b, 31a. In Josh. xix. 5, Hazar-susah = "Horse-village" occurs, and Beth-marcaboth = "House of Chariots."

unoccupied region, therefore, that was to be conquered by Joshua, but a land strongly defended, full of people, and provided with all appliances for resistance. Nor was it without marked culture, for its libraries gave a name to some of its cities.

Nothing, however, could withstand the fiery enthusiasm of the Hebrews, who came, like the valiant Franks in the fifth century, as the last great wave of national imigration to seek new homes. It was well that they had failed forty years before, when still imperfectly grounded in their religious principles, for they would then assuredly have adopted the idolatry of the Canaanites. Forty years' seclusion in the wilderness, with its terrible discipline, crowned by the calamity and shame of Baal-peor, had made them, at least for the time, fierce zealots, to whom the idols of Palestine were abominations as hateful as were the hideous gods of Mexico, with their human sacrifices, in the eyes of the invading Spaniards; an aversion which, in spite of temporary apostasies on their part, in the end wrought the overthrow of the whole system so utterly, that we are indebted for the names of some of the Canaanite deities rather to their revival by Milton, in his *Paradise Lost*, than to the pages of Scripture.

Yet the difficulties of the Hebrews were immense. To the iron chariots,[1] the horses, and the fortresses of the country,[2] and its formidable leagues of chiefs and kings, they could oppose only a rude, half-armed militia, with inadequate military training. They had to overcome those who

[1] It has been thought that the "iron chariots" meant chariots provided with sharp sickles at the hubs of the wheels. But these were not used in Asia before the time of Cyrus, and were wholly unknown in Egypt, where the common chariots were of wood clamped with iron. Chariots with sickles at the wheels are first mentioned in 2 Macc. xiii. 2. See Schenkel's *Lex.*, vol. v. p. 287.

[2] Keil's *Archäologie*, p. 749.

fought for their homes and their country, and were familiar with every part of it. But an enthusiasm, like that which made the ragged and worn levies of France irresistible in the first campaigns of the Great Revolution, filled every bosom; sustained in this case, moreover, by a profound belief among the invading force that God was at their head. Though only on foot, they felt such confidence, under this lofty inspiration, that they despised the strong fortresses they would have to attack, and captured the chariots and horses only to show their contempt of such aids by burning the one and cutting the sinews of the other.[1] Asses, not horses, were the glory of Israel; their chiefs habitually using them, and even their kings till the time of Solomon having only mules, at the best.

The supreme authority over the nation and the army had been intrusted by Moses, before his death, to Joshua, his faithful "minister" since the days of the Mount of God. Born about the time when his great master fled to Midian, the future hero, who very possibly had served under Pharaoh as a military man, was in the prime of life at the Exodus, and had already so commended himself to the keen eye of Moses on the march to Sinai, that the repelling of the attack made by Amalek at Rephidim had been intrusted to him. A scion of the great tribe of Ephraim, his birth commanded the loyalty of all its members, and of the nation at large; for Ephraim, as the representative of Joseph, was as yet its recognized head. But his own qualities were in themselves fitted to attract confidence. With no claim to be a prophet, but rather disliking those who may have seemed to him, as a soldier, talkers rather than actors,[2] he bore himself only as

[1] Deut. xvii. 16. Josh. x. 20; xi. 6, 9; xvii. 15-18. Judg. v. 8, 22. 1 Sam. xv. 4. 2 Sam. viii. 4.

[2] Num. xi. 28.

a warrior, with a given task to accomplish, and resolute to carry it out. To Moses, God had appeared in the burning bush : to Joshua, the final commission and Divine encouragement was given by the vision of a "man"—"the Captain of the host of Jehovah"—"with His sword drawn in His hand." Nor is it without significance as an index to his character, that he forthwith advances to meet the apparition, doubtless, spear in hand ; but presently, on learning its nature, takes off his war-shoes, as standing on holy ground, and worships, prostrate on the earth.[1] But the choice of the plain, unpretending soldier proved its wisdom by its result. Had Phinehas, the warlike and fiercely zealous son of Aaron, been selected, a priestly stamp would inevitably have marked the future of Israel ; if, indeed, a priest-royalty had not been founded in his line. Or, had a son of Moses been appointed successor to his father, there is no security that he would have been equal to the office, and the foundation of hereditary monarchy in his family could scarcely have been avoided.

The River Jordan, which now rolled its swollen current between Israel and the Promised Land, is formed by the junction of three powerful springs which burst out from the slopes or foot of the southern hills of Lebanon. The most northerly is known as the Hasbany, rising with a strong outflow in the hills near Hasbeia, at a height of about twenty-two hundred feet above the sea. The stream from it flows through a deep and dark gorge, in a rushing torrent, to the fruitful plains on the east foot of the Upper Galilean Mountains. A second source is the Leddan, which bursts out with a copiousness which makes it one of the greatest springs in the world, from the bottom of the vol-

[1] Josh. v. 13–15.

canic hill on which stood anciently the city of Dan. Nothing could be more striking than the rush of crystal-clear water from the earth, as a full-grown river from the first; a phenomenon so beneficent in such a land that I thought, as I pushed aside the overhanging boughs to look at it, how naturally it accounts for a town having been built in the earliest ages close to it. This is the middle stream. The most easterly source breaks out in the same way, in full strength from the ground, at Banias, the ancient Cæsarea Philippi, at a height of twelve hundred and ten feet above the sea. It is about half the breadth of the Leddan, and twice as broad as the Hasbany. I thought no spot could be more beautiful than the ravine through which it flows from the foot of the hill out of which it rises. The three sources, after a rapid and at times rushing course, over the descending channels, unite some miles north of Lake Huleh, which lies ninety feet above the Mediterranean. Huleh is for miles covered with dense thickets of reeds, in which Herod the Great used to hunt the wild boar, but its northern and western borders have a good breadth of rich land, now cultivated by a tribe of Arabs, who live in curious houses built of wattled reeds, the hills of Upper Galilee rising behind the plain on the west, while, on the east side, those of Gaulonitis rise sheer from the lake. The reed beds reach far down the basin, but, after they end, a stretch of beautiful blue water brightens the landscape, which is crossed a little below Huleh by the remotely old caravan track from Damascus to Palestine and Egypt, which crosses the Jordan after it leaves the lake, on a bridge of black basalt, of three arches, in a very bad condition, like everything under the Turk. For two miles from Huleh the river flows sluggishly till it enters a narrow gorge, with high and somewhat precipitous

hills on each side. Down this it rushes for the next nine miles as a foaming torrent, descending nearly 900 feet to the level of the Sea of Galilee, which lies 682 feet[1] below the Mediterranean, and entering it through a swampy flat, the plain of El Batihah, where I have seen the black buffaloes immersed to the head for coolness, and thought of the miracle of the Feeding of the Multitude, which took place on the east side of it. The Sea of Galilee, lying in a girdle of hills, rounded on the west and north, flat-topped like a table-land on the east, is a sheet of crystal-clear water, about six miles across at its broadest part, or, as others say, eight, and, according to different authorities, twelve or thirteen miles long, from north to south.[2] The hills enclosing it are from one thousand to fifteen hundred feet high, running in great part close to the water's edge, but in places, receding, so as to form the famous land-bay known as the plain of Gennesareth, and the level space round the town of Tiberias, and also some other open tracts of no great size. Leaving this lake, the Jordan flows towards the Dead Sea through a channel formed by a cleft in the rocky foundations of the land, the result of some great physical convulsion. Deep down in this strange bed, which varies much in breadth, and is known by the name of the Ghor, or "depression," the bottom of this rift has been worn into a second and a third channel; the lowest, that in which the river is content to flow in the dry season; the second, which rises in some places forty, in others one hundred and fifty feet, and is thickly clothed with luxuriant verdure on its higher, and dense reed beds, the haunts of wild creatures, on its lower parts—the whole forming what is called in our version "the swelling of the Jordan," though it should rather be its "pride," or

[1] Conder's *Tent Work*, p. 290. [2] Schumacher's *The Jaulan*, p. 125.

"glory."[1] When the snows melt on Hermon the floods from it raise the lakes at least a foot above their ordinary level, and, rushing down the channel, cause the stream to rise over its second banks, till the waters spread in some places to a mile in breadth, with the white cliffs and steep slopes of the great cleft as their bounds, causing the wild boars which haunt the thickets now, as lions did in Bible times, to flee to the hills for their lives. It is a curious illustration of the intense heat of the Ghor as a whole, that the great evaporation makes up for the contributions of even such tributaries as the Jabbok, so that the usual breadth of the river is about the same through all its length, though the surface of the Dead Sea is fifteen feet higher in winter than in summer, when the heat balances the inflow by the evaporation it creates. Within its strange bed the river descends with innumerable windings. So tortuous, indeed, is its course, that in the 66 miles between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea in a direct line, it darts at so many angles over its rough bed as to make its whole length nearly 200 miles; and in this distance it leaps and rushes over twenty-seven rapids, including, in all, a descent of 606 feet.[2] It need hardly be said that such a river is not navigable in any part, and that the lake in which it disappears never had a port.

It was now the month Abib, part of our April and May, when the barley and flax harvests were ripe. The melting of the snows in Hermon, as usual at this season—just about the time of the Passover—had raised the stream till its yellow waters had overflowed the lower banks, far and near. How high the waters had risen is not stated, but when Canon Tristram last visited these parts they had been

[1] Jer. xlix. 19; l. 44. Zech. xi. 3. [2] Conder's *Handbook*, p. 215.

fourteen feet above their usual level at the last spring floods,[1] but the height varies and is much greater in some years than in others. That such a time should have been chosen for crossing might well impress on Israel the supernatural aid it enjoyed, and could not fail, proportionally, to discourage the enemy.

Two young men[2] having been selected to act as spies, and sent over the river, the last preparations were made for crossing, and thus, undesignedly, for deciding the future history of the chosen people as that of a settled, agricultural community, rather than wandering shepherd tribes. On the fifth day, apparently, the spies returned, having bravely swum across the river—like the eleven mighty men from the uplands of Gad, when they cast in their lot with David[3]—and brought a report which emboldened both Joshua and the people in their enterprise more than ever. They had been in great danger, but had been saved by the fidelity of Rahab, a woman of Jericho, to whose house they had gone; repaying her by the promise of protection to herself and her family when the city should be taken—a pledge which Joshua and the tribes faithfully kept. Indeed, she was afterwards married to a Hebrew, and so completely adopted into the nation, that she became one of the ancestors of David, and through him, of our Lord. Nor were her family and connections forgotten; they, too, lived permanently in Israel on a footing of friendship and equality.[4]

[1] *Land of Israel*, p. 223. [2] Septuagint. [3] 1 Chron. xii. 15. See p. 421.

[4] It has been sought to explain Rahab's position as that of a hostess. But there are neither hosts nor hostesses in Eastern khans; nor would it have been possible for men to lodge at the house of any respectable Eastern woman. Rahab's being asked to bring out the spies to the soldiers sent for them, is in strict keeping with Eastern manners, which would not permit any man to enter a woman's house without her permission. The fact of her covering the spies with the bundles of flax which lay on her house roof to dry is an "undesigned coincidence," which strikingly corroborates the narrative. (Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences*, p. 105.) It was

An order was now issued that the people should "sanctify" themselves by a strict legal purification,[1] and preparation of heart, in anticipation of the wonders to be wrought by God on their behalf. Next day the crossing took place. The cloudy pillar had disappeared, apparently, with the death of Moses; but in its absence, as a symbol of the presence of God with the host, the sacred Ark was borne before the host, on the shoulders of priests. Behind them, at a reverent distance of more than half a mile, came forty thousand men from the trans-Jordanic tribes, forming the van, contrary to the rule as to their position;[2] then, according to tradition, the women and children, in the centre: the rest of the armed men following in their rear. But now was seen an amazing miracle. As soon as the feet of the priests had been wetted in the utmost edge of the Jordan, though not till then, the waters parted before them, and they passed on—their bare feet sinking in the soft bottom as they advanced[3]—to the middle of the channel, and there stood till the whole host had passed over. The stream, meanwhile, checked in its course, "rose up," we are told, "upon an heap, very far off, by Adam, the city that is near Zaretan,"[4] which, it would seem, was not far from Succoth, near the mouth of the Jabbok, that is, at a distance of about thirty miles north, unless, indeed, the name Adam, which means red, point to a stream running into the Jordan, a little south of Beisan, known to the Arabs as the red water, from the discolouration of its waters by the red earth of its banks. In

the time of the barley harvest, and flax and barley are ripe at the same time in the Jordan Valley, so that the bundles of flax stalks might have been expected to be drying just then. That Rahab had them implies, further, that the women of the country made their own linen, from the very first process. Flax grows in the Jordan Valley to more than three feet in height and has a stalk as thick as a cane.

[1] Exod. xix. 10. Lev. xi. 44. [2] Num. xxxii. 20. Josh. iv. 12.
[3] Josh. iv. 18. [4] *Sinai and Palestine*, p. 298 *n.* 1 Kings vii. 46.

the great map of the Palestine Survey. Adam is conjecturally identified with Tel Damieh, near the ford Damieh, which may, perhaps, preserve the Scripture name. In any case, the Hebrews could cross along a great breadth of front, which would immensely facilitate the passage.

An event so wonderful could not be allowed to pass without a memorial, and a double one was appointed, worthy of it in expressive simplicity. Twelve of the large stones laid bare in the bed of the river were ordered to be carried over to the western side and raised on the upper terrace of the valley, in the centre of the new camping ground, while a second twelve were placed on the spot in the channel where the feet of the priests had stood during the crossing. But such is the tendency to associate superstition with even the simplest religious memorials, among a rude people, that the stones set up at the hills, which gave the name Gilgal, "a circle," to the spot, became ultimately the seat of confirmed idolatry to all the Jewish tribes.[1]

The site thus chosen, has been fortunately identified, after more than 3,000 years, by the intelligent labours of the members of the Palestine Survey. The name Jiljulieh, which is the same word as Gilgal, still clings to a mound about three miles south-east from the spot where, apparently, the city of Jericho must have stood; near the beautiful fountain known as the Sultan's Spring, and close to the steep background of the limestone hills of Judah. The host of the Hebrews, at the camp thus chosen for them, were about 500 feet above the bed of the Jordan, and had the stream from the Wady el Kelt close on the south. The river they had crossed lay underneath them about 4½ miles to the east. An open plain stretched on all sides and per-

[1] Hos. iv. 13; ix. 15; xii. 11. Amos iv. 4; v. 5.

mitted free movement; the wall of the hills of Judah rising 1,000 feet above the level of the camp, at the distance of about three miles to the west.[1] The site is conspicuous from a distance, as a great tamarisk tree marks it, and the view from it is very fine. About a dozen mounds rise near it, perhaps ten feet across and three or four high, but when opened they were found to consist of sandy marl, in which were bits of pottery, glass, and the like, pointing rather to a time when a monastery stood on the spot than to the days of Joshua. That such a memorial, associated with religious observances, should have been raised by the Hebrews, seems to point back to the custom prevalent in early ages, in Palestine as elsewhere, of consecrating huge stones as religious emblems. Major Conder discovered, in all, about seven hundred stone monuments of this character east and west of the Jordan, and they are found from Norway to Tunis, and from India to Ireland. They occur in Arabia, Armenia, Persia, the Crimea, Greece, Cyprus, and Phœnicia, and elsewhere, and are traced by some to an early Mongolian race which is thought to have occupied these lands before the Aryans and Semites. There are many such monuments in Galilee, Bashan, Gilead, and Moab, but none in Samaria or Judæa, all that were ever there having, probably, been destroyed by kings like Hezekiah and Josiah, or by the later Jews, as idolatrous.

The name Gilgal, however, is said to have been first intended as a direct allusion to the rolling away of the last trace of the degradation and reproach of their Egyptian slavery, by the circumcision of the host, which had been neglected in the wilderness, but was now commanded

[1] Conder's *Tent Work*, pp. 201 f. *Palestine Fund Large Map of Palestine*, sheet 18.

by Joshua, as the appointed acknowledgment of their national covenant with God at Sinai.[1] It was meet, on the threshold of so great an enterprise, which was, in fact, a claim from Jehovah to fulfil the promise given by Him to their fathers, of bringing them into Canaan as its conquerors, that they should, on their side, fulfil the condition He had imposed as the badge of their consecration to Him as a people.[2]

Circumcision was the condition of God's giving them the land, but it had fallen into abeyance during the wilderness life. Even the Passover, indeed, had not been kept after leaving[3] Sinai, because, as Jewish commentators explain, it was not to be held again till the people had entered Canaan.[4] It was prudent, also, that a feeling of strong separation from the race they were about to attack, and of their superiority to them, as the chosen people of God, should be thus duly impressed on them. But another allusion may well have been to the circle[5] of twelve stones, raised by Joshua's orders: the first sanctuary of Israel in Palestine. Indeed, as we have seen, such cromlechs and dolmens were associated with the earliest forms of religion in almost every country.

Gilgal formed a basis for future operations, and remained the headquarters of the army and of the tribes for some years; the Tabernacle being set up in it as the national sanctuary, till it was at a later time removed to Shiloh. Meanwhile, two additional associations connected themselves with the spot: in the celebration of the first Passover kept in Canaan; and by the cessation, on the day after, of the fall of manna, and its replacement by the "old corn of the

[1] Gen. xvii. 10-14.
[2] Gen. xvii. 7.
[3] Num. ix. 5.
[4] Exod. xii. 25; xiii. 5-10.
[5] In Neh. xii. 27-29, we read more fully of "the Gilgal" = "the circle." In Isa. xxviii. 28, it is translated "wheel."

land," found, doubtless, in the houses and grain-pits of the inhabitants.[1]

The taking of Jericho was evidently the first task before Israel, for it stood at the entrance of the main passes up to the interior, and was thus the key of the land. Till it had fallen they could not advance, for their rear would be left exposed ; but when it was once taken, they would be free to move forward. The copiousness of its water supply, and the consequent fertility of the soil, heightened by the almost tropical heat of a neighbourhood 600 or 700 feet below the level of the sea, might well have been another inducement to the Hebrews to make it their own ; but they were in no mood to spare either the city or its inhabitants, and looked upon the whole place as accursed.

It was, indeed, a delightful spot. The torrent of the Wady Kelt, rushing, when in flood, from between the tremendous precipices through which it finds its way from the central hills, swept across the plain to the Jordan. A little to the north, two copious springs welled out in permanent streams from the foot of the hills, which form, north and south, the background of the plain—the hills in whose caverns the spies had hidden. The landscape created by such strong brooks, in so warm a climate, and then covered with rich cultivation, can still be imagined from the masses of tangled shrubs still marking their course.

Such a scene must have had unspeakable charms to the Hebrews, in its contrast to the long privations of the wilderness. From their camp at Gilgal, the eye wandered over a vast grove of majestic palms, nearly three miles in breadth and eight miles long, interspersed now, in the late spring, with ripening corn fields. The yellow hills rising behind,

[1] Josh. v. 10–12.

only heightened the charms of the landscape by their dreary bareness. At their base, and thus commanding the whole view, embowered in verdure, were the temples and palaces of Jericho, a city famous for its wealth and luxury no less than for its position, but the object of the bitter hatred of Israel, as a centre of that idol worship which had left amongst them the burning memories of Baal-peor. It was, indeed, the local seat of the worship of Ashtoreth, the consort of Baal—its very name meaning the city of the Moon,[1] which was the symbol of that goddess. Hence it represented all that was foulest and most revolting in the heathenism of the Canaanites, which Israel had been taught to regard as an abomination to Jehovah, and, as such, to be rooted out by the sword of Divine justice, now intrusted to their hands. The only thought they could entertain towards it, therefore, was one of loathing abhorrence, fittingly expressed in the command they presently received from Joshua, to devote it to destruction, sparing from the universal ruin and effacement only objects of metal, which could be cleansed from defilement in the purifying furnace.

The lesson taught by the capture of this stronghold was in keeping with that of the passage of the Jordan. Human agency was, in both cases, superseded by the direct and manifest power of God, and Israel made to feel His presence and His resistless might. In crossing the swollen river, they had simply looked on while nature was controlled on their behalf. In the taking of Jericho, they had only to obey commands which had no natural relation to such an enterprise. Safe, as it fancied, within its high and strong walls, and, doubtless, well-provisioned, the city appeared as if it could defy the assault of a force, however numerous,

[1] Hitzig, *Geschichte*, p. 98.

which had no materials for a siege ; nor would it fear blockade, in the near prospect of relief which it was justified in entertaining. The crowded population must indeed, at first, have been terror-struck at the approach of the conquerors of Gilead and Bashan, else they would have opposed the crossing of the river ; but when, instead of an attack, they saw only, day by day, strange circuits of the town by the forces of the enemy, guarding their priests as they bore the Ark on their shoulders, amidst the sound of trumpets,[1] either of ram's horns or like them in shape—their panic may well have turned to confidence. That the walls should give way and open a wide breach after the seven circuits of the seventh day must have raised only one thought in the bosom of all Israel—that the victory was not theirs but God's. It is not even hinted that one of the earthquakes, so common in that region, happened at the time, though such a coincidence has been imagined.

The terrible sternness with which Joshua destroyed the whole population of the city, and even the cattle found in it, has seemed to many in strange contradiction to the mercy inculcated elsewhere in the Bible, and even to the instincts of nature. Yet Israel was expressly commanded to "smite and utterly destroy the Canaanite race, showing no mercy,"[2] and "to save alive nothing that breathed,"[3] and it would

[1] The phrase is, literally, "trumpets of soundings" or "of jubilee." It is singular to notice the constant recurrence of the number seven. Seven priests go before the Ark, with seven trumpets, for seven days, going seven times round the city on the seventh day. The Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles each lasted seven days. The consecration of priests also took seven days. Seven victims were required on special occasions. To ratify an oath, was "to seven it." The number seems to have been regarded as the symbol of completeness or perfection, and to have been, as such, connected intimately with everything relating to God. It was sacred also among the Persians (Esth. i. 10, 14), among the ancient Indians, and, to some extent, among the Greeks and Romans.

[2] Deut. vii. 2. [3] Deut. xx. 16.

seem that, at least in some cases, Joshua literally carried out this universal proscription. Not only at Jericho, but, we are told, throughout all the hill country, the Negeb, the lowlands, and the slopes, "he left none remaining, but destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God of Israel commanded."[1] Yet it is doubtful if this is to be accepted in the widest sense, for we find the regions thus named as entirely depopulated, filled, for ages after, with Canaanite towns and cities, so strong as not only to shake off the Hebrew yoke, and drive Israel permanently to the hills, but even, in some cases, to attack them there and reduce them from time to time to dependence. Still, the fact remains that the extermination of whole peoples was divinely commanded, and that the neglect to carry it out to the uttermost is named as a criminal disobedience to Jehovah, for which Israel had to pay a terrible penalty.[2]

But if, on the one hand, the character of the religion of the Canaanites be remembered, and, on the other, the Divine purpose to develop among the Israelites a pure and lofty Theocracy, through which, hereafter, the highest manifestation of the kingdom of God on earth was to be made known among men, the apparent difficulty in accepting the policy commanded to Joshua is lessened. The heathenism of Palestine and Syria was so foul and degrading in every sense,

[1] Josh. x. 40. It was not uncommon among ancient nations to "devote" persons or things to utter destruction. Thus Cæsar tells us that among the Gauls, "when they have resolved to fight, they often *devote* those things they may take in the war, to Mars, and when they have conquered, they burn the animals taken." *Bell. Gall.*, vi. 17. Tacitus tells us of the Hermunduri, that they were successful in a war with the Catti, "because the victors *devoted* the opposing army to Mars and Mercury, by which vow horses, men, and all things taken are given up to destruction." *Ann.*, xiii. 57. Livy also mentions a Roman law, which runs, "Whoever injured a tribune of the people, an ædile, judge, or decemvir, his head shall be *devoted* to Jupiter, and his family sold into slavery." iii. 55.

[2] Judg. ii. 2.

that there is no State, even at this time, which would not put it down; if necessary, by the severest penalties. Its spread to Rome was bewailed 1,500 years later by the satirists of the day as a calamity marking the utter decay of the times.[1] It was essential, therefore, that the land in which the Chosen People were to be educated in the true religion, so as to become the disseminators of its doctrines through the world, should be cleared of whatever would so certainly neutralize the gracious plans of the Almighty. Nor is it wonderful that no other means of securing this great end presented itself, in that age, to the Hebrew legislator or reformer, in the presence of such hideous immorality and corruption, than the rooting it out with the edge of the sword.[2]

The results that actually followed the imperfect obedience to the Divine command shew at once the necessity and the true mercy which it embodied, in spite of its sternness. Eager to enjoy the new land to which they had come, the Israelites soon lost their first enthusiasm, and sought ignoble ease, by friendly alliances and intermarriage with their heathen neighbours. But the frequent and profound lapses into idolatry through this course, proved how real was the danger, to protect them from which the proscription of the Canaanites had been dictated.

Nor must it be forgotten that the nations of Palestine had had repeated warnings and a long time for reformation. Forty years had passed since the news of the passage of the Red Sea, and of the wonders in Egypt, had proclaimed the greatness of Jehovah above all gods. The recent conquest of the kings of Gilead and Bashan had no less vividly shown that a mighty invincible Power fought on the side of Israel.

[1] Juvenal, *Sat.*, iii. 62 [2] Schlottmann, in Riehm, p. 129.

and rightfully claimed universal homage. The certain punishment of impurity by this Almighty Being had been seen, moreover, in the fatal plague with which He had smitten even His own people, for mingling in the abominations of Baal-peor. Rahab, in Jericho, had heard of these judgments, and, doubtless, the conviction of the people at large, through the land, however they may have stifled reflection, was the same as hers, that "Jehovah, the God of Israel, was God in heaven above and in earth beneath."[1]

The customs of these remote times must not, besides, be forgotten: for a mode of executing Divine judgments that might seem terrible in our age, was only the natural course of things in antiquity. To kill all the men, or even all the population of a conquered town, was the common practice in war. "I fought against the city" (Ataroth, of the tribe of Gad), says King Mesha, on the Moabite stone, "and took it, and slaughtered all the men, to please Chemosh, the god of Moab," "and I put in it, in their stead, the men of Schiran and of Schacharath, to inhabit it." "I took the town Nebo (from Israel), and put to the sword all its inhabitants, seven chiefs of the tribes . . . the women and the children, for Chemosh had uttered a curse against it."[2] Joshua's course, therefore, though in his case the execution of a righteous judgment for terrible iniquity, and an all-wise preparation for a grand scheme of favour to mankind at large, was only that of the Canaanites themselves, in their own wars, which would have been carried out on Israel had they been conquerors.

The comparative humanity of our day, we must, moreover, remember, has been attained only by the development of right feelings through thousands of years, and implies a

[1] Josh. ii. 11.

[2] *Studien u. Kritiken*, 1871, p. 594.

public sentiment which the world in Joshua's day, and for ages after, was wholly unable to comprehend or accept.

If, further, contrasted with usages of war in at least some cases in these fierce times, the sternness of Joshua seems wonderful in its dignified restraint. Compare his action with that of the Assyrian king, Assur-Nasir-Pal, who reigned from B.C. 885 to B.C. 858.

"They brought me word," (says that monarch)
"That the city of Suri had revolted. . . .
Chariots and army I collected. From the rebellious nobles
I stripped off their skin and made them into a trophy.
Some I left, in the middle of the pile, to decay.
Some I impaled on the top of the hill, on stakes.
Some I placed by the side of the pile, in order, on stakes.
I flayed many within view of my land, and
Arranged their skins on the walls.
I brought Ahiyababa to Nineveh. I flayed him, and
Fastened his skin to the wall. . . ."

"I drew near to Tila.
I besieged the city with onset and attack.
Many soldiers I captured alive.
Of some, I chopped off the hands and feet ; of others, I cut off
The noses and ears, and I destroyed the eyes of many.
One pile of bodies I reared up while they were yet alive,
And I raised another, of heads, on the heights within their town.
Their boys and their maidens I dishonoured." [1]

The strange scene, a little later, after the march of Israel to Shechem, helps us to realize the spirit in which Joshua and the nation carried out their mission of conquest and retribution. Fresh from the scenes of Jericho and Ai, they gathered between Ebal and Gerizim, to listen to the words of the Law, which proclaimed a blessing upon purity, justice, order, and truthfulness between man and man ; de-

[1] *Records of the Past*, vol. iii. pp. 39-50. *Cuneiform Inscrip. of Western Asia*, vol. i. pp. 17-27.

manded absolute obedience to a holy God; and denounced curses on impurity, injustice, sensuality, and wrong-doing.[1] Mere bloodthirstiness, or savage ferocity, cannot be rightly attributed to a people capable of such a transaction, however different their ideas in some respects may have been from ours. In Jericho, as already said, they saw only the pollution which had brought on them terrible punishment after Baal-peor, and their fierceness was that of a people eager to act as the ministers of Jehovah, at once in preventing a repetition of a temptation so great, and in striking terror into the country at large, as a preparation for its conquest. It was certain, also, that the camp at Gilgal could not be safe with such a stronghold of the enemy at hand. For their own sakes, moreover, the hatefulness of idolatry in the sight of God, as shown in His demanding the utter destruction not only of the transgressors, but even of all they had, and of the very city itself,[2] needed to be burned in on their souls.

"The Israelites' sword," says Dr. Arnold, "in its bloodiest executions, wrought a work of mercy for all the countries of the earth, to the very end of the world. They seem of very small importance to us now, those perpetual contests with the Canaanites, and the Midianites, and the Ammonites, and the Philistines, with which the Books of Joshua, and Judges, and Samuel, are almost filled. We may half wonder that God should have interposed in such quarrels, or have changed the course of nature, in order to give one of these nations of Palestine the victory over another. But

[1] Josh. viii. 33, 34.

[2] A city which was "devoted" to God by a curse could not be rebuilt, Deut. xiii. 15-17. But this seems to have been understood, in the case of Jericho, only to its being rebuilt as a fortified place; for we find it inhabited in the time of the Judges, and Joshua himself gave it to Benjamin. Judg. iii. 13. 2 Sam. x. 5. In the same way Agamemnon is said to have uttered a curse on Ilium, and Scipio on Carthage.

in these contests, on the fate of one of these nations of Palestine, the happiness of the human race depended. The Israelites fought, not for themselves only, but for us. It might follow that they should thus be accounted the enemies of all mankind: it might be that they were tempted by their very distinctness, to despise other nations. Still they did God's work; still they preserved, unhurt, the seed of eternal life, and were the ministers of blessing to all other nations, even though they themselves failed to enjoy it."[1]

The country which now invited conquest lay before the camp of Israel as a great mass of hills, rising from the back of Jericho in height above height, till its central elevation reached nearly 4,000 feet above the spot on which they stood. Western Palestine is, indeed, little more than a wide tangle of mountains, seamed by valleys, of all depths and breadths, which on both sides run east and west, and form the only roads through the labyrinth. The Dead Sea, close by Gilgal, lies 1,292 feet below the Mediterranean, the city of Jericho standing about 600 feet above it; but many of the heights before them tower, at 12 or 14 miles' distance, to a height of 2,500 feet above its level. Some of the cliffs on the Dead Sea rise 2,000 feet above the waters below, but some hills beyond them, north of Hebron,[2] are 2,000 feet higher, and others, in various parts of the land, are still loftier.[3] Bethlehem is 2,550 feet above the Mediterranean; Jebus, the future Jerusalem, 43 feet more; the hill behind it on the east, our Mount of Olives, 2,683; Neby Samuel, a little to the north, 2,935; Mounts Gerizim and Ebal, in the centre of the land at Shechem, rise to the height of 2,849 and 3,076 feet respectively; and Shechem itself lies in a valley 1,800

[1] Arnold's *Sermons*, vol. v. pp. 35–37.

[2] Râs esh Shukf is 2,579 feet above the level of the Dead Sea; Masada, 1,702 feet.

[3] Conder's *Map*.

feet high, while the tops of Mount Carmel and Mount Tabor have almost the same elevation. Mount Jurmuk, a few miles north-west of the Sea of Galilee, was 4,000 feet high; and the town of Safed, close by, looked over the country from a height of 2,800 feet. Nor were these the only heights worthy to be called mountains. Across the Jordan, "the hill of Bashan"[1] cast its shadow from an elevation of 5,900 feet, and, on the northern limit of the land, the vast peaks of Lebanon, "the white," shine down from the upper skies over great part of the land. The long-drawn roof of Hermon, especially, over 9,000 feet high, flashes from its snowy rocks like a cloud of light to almost every point of the central northern landscapes, for I have looked up to it from the plain along the coast, from the hills of Samaria, and from the wide level of the Hauran, its dazzling, unstained splendour filling the mind with awe and rapture from all, alike.

The whole country, however, "from Dan to Beersheba," is a very small one, for it measures only one hundred and thirty-nine miles, north and south, from the one to the other, and the paltry breadth of twenty miles from the coast to the Jordan, in the north of the land, increases slowly to only forty between the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean, at Gaza, in the south. Palestine is, in fact, only about the size of the small principality of Wales. It must have seemed spacious,[2] however, compared to the narrow ribbon of green along the banks of the Nile, which constitutes Egypt, though the Hebrews, having lived in the Delta, where the cultivable land offers wider landscapes, would contrast their new home rather with the Egypt best known to them than with that south of their district.

[1] Jebel Djuelib, in the *Ledja*. The heights are taken from the Great Map of the Palestine Survey, and from Kiepert's Map. [2] Exod. iii. 8.

Except on the coast, the one plain in the whole of Palestine, large enough to be readily noticeable on a map, is that of Esdraelon, which measures fourteen miles across from Jenin to the hills below Nazareth, and about nine from the ancient Jezreel, on the western slope of Gilboa, to Ledja, the ancient Legio, which lies nearly west of it. The length of this fine open tract, from Jenin to the sea, on the northwest, is about twenty-five miles, but the hills on its two sides come together five miles before the Mediterranean is reached, though they soon open once more. Along the edge of the Mediterranean, however, a level strip runs from north to south the whole length of the country; narrow on the north, in Phœnicia; broadening to an average of five miles before it reaches the promontory of Carmel, and forming a distinct district south of that point, under the names of the plains of Sharon and of Philistia. It has been formed by the slow elevation of the land from the sea and by the waste from the inland hills: its surface in some parts consisting more or less of sand; at others of good soil. The sea line is fringed with sand dunes which steadily advance over the arable ground, and must have long ago buried a wide strip of what in ancient times was fertile soil. At Askalon I saw many fig and olive trees nearly overwhelmed by the drifting sand, and all along the coast one meets trees which are only kept alive by their owners carefully digging away the sand from around them, till they are in more or less deep hollows. At Gaza, indeed, the sand has encroached several miles, and the ancient port of Jamnia, near Ashdod, is in a sandy waste, while Ashdod itself has a struggle with the ever advancing enemy. The surface of both Sharon and Philistia is undulating, with hillocks of indurated sand here and there. Several permanent streams cross Sharon and

find their way to the sea, though more or less checked at different parts of their short course by wide marshes from their overflow and the neglect of ages. In Philistia there is no permanent stream; though, as in Sharon, there are many rough torrent beds, filled after winter or spring storms by a rushing flood, which is soon past. In the days of Joshua this wide and long stretch of fertile soil was the glory of Palestine, and, indeed, even now, it is the richest part of it, though much more of its surface is left untouched than the trifle utilized at different spots. The breadth of this great plain is about eight miles near Carmel, on the north, and at Gaza, in the south, about twenty, while its entire length is about eighty.

Rising from this wide and beautiful expanse, on its inland side, a long succession of low hills, known in the Old Testament as the Shephelah, swell up to meet the central mountains, which stretch along like a purple wall, as one looks at them from the coast. The foot-hills of the Shephelah rise to about five hundred feet, and are dotted with villages, round which are patches of ploughed land, and wide expanses of pasture, forming a delightful approach to the rough passes by which alone access is obtained to the mountain regions.

These heights, forming "highlands," in the truest sense, and contrasted with the "lowlands" of the great Maritime Plain, are the Canaan of the Bible, for the Hebrews did not gain till a very late period a permanent footing outside their lofty bounds. Approached from the south, they greatly disappoint ordinary conceptions of Palestine by their gray barrenness; for, from Hebron north, to the lower edge of Samaria, they shew only a wild confusion of bare limestone humps, the painful sterility of which is relieved only

here and there, as at Bethlehem, by the fruitfulness of a strip of valley running beneath. Nothing could be more desolate than the landscape near Jerusalem, and the pass from the Shephelah to Hebron climbs through hills which culture might redeem from barrenness, but which now rise gray and dismal, mile after mile. In early times, however, even these white limestone bosses, when duly terraced and cared for, would be very different from their present state; for the flakes and splinters of stone separated by the weather from their parent mass, need only to be kept together by a wall along the slope to become rich soil in a very short time. Indeed, at Nazareth, I saw vines and fruit trees planted in beds of mere broken stone, and was assured that they would grow luxuriantly: the stone becoming pulverized in a few seasons.

In this way, there is no doubt, surfaces now utterly barren were turned into fruitfulness in Hebrew times; in fact, the traces of terraces on many hillsides show that this mode of creating fertility was universal in early ages. Even now, in fact, we see it at Bethlehem, Gibeon, and many other places. The hills west of the Jordan seem never in historical times to have been covered with such forests as still give special beauty to Gilead, though they were in some places, as, for instance, Bethel, rough with scrubby growths —the yaars of the Bible—at least as late as the Kings. There are now, however, no trees of very large size west of the Jordan. Here and there we meet a good-sized sycamore or ilex, but, as a rule, only olive and other fruit trees break the bareness of the landscape. Nor could the country ever in Scripture times have been watered as that beyond Jordan is. No bright rushing streams fall into that river from the west, and we find that the Hebrews had it held out to them

as one attraction of their intended home, that they would find in it wells which they had not dug—that is, water cisterns, hewn out in the rock.[1] The ground is everywhere, indeed, as it were honeycombed with ancient cisterns, and the Canaanites, as this assurance proves, and as Ezra at a later date repeats,[2] were famous for their possessions of many such reservoirs. They must, moreover, have been often of great size, for there was room in the cistern dug by Asa at Mizpeh, for seventy corpses.[3] Palestine must thus have been always a waterless country, compared with the districts beyond Jordan, though, one would think, there must once have been as rich forests on the hills to the west of the river as are now found to the east. Yet we must remember that Gilead is only the northern part of the region east of Palestine, and that far the greater part of it, lying more to the south, is smooth pasture land, free from rocks and stones, but also from trees, like our downs, and possibly Western Palestine may have been to a large extent of this character. Now, at any rate, its wadys or ravines are mere torrent beds, dry for most of the year, and then used as the roads of the country, but at times filled for a few hours or days with tremendous rain-floods, sweeping down from the hills.

The ascent from Jericho to the central uplands must always have been through the gloomy defile of the Wady Kelt, which rises between towering precipices of utterly bare rock, with steep and difficult footing, over countless loose stones of all sizes, to the plateau above. In such a gorge, with many side clefts in the mountain walls, from which an enemy might at any moment break out to dispute the passage, it was necessary to use every precaution against

[1] Deut. vi. 11. [2] Neh. ix. 25. [3] Jer. xli. 9.

surprise. At its upper end stood a town called Ai, "the ruins," commanding the road to Jebus, or Jerusalem, and the approaches to Central Palestine. Close to it, on another hill, rose Bethel, and both must be taken, to make farther advance possible. Spies, accordingly, were once more sent out to "view the country," but in this case their underestimate of the strength of the enemy led to disaster. Two or three thousand men, they reported, were enough to take Ai, and it would be useless for more to be sent. About three thousand men therefore ascended the pass to attack it, but only to meet with a repulse, and the loss of thirty-six of their number. Such a check at the very opening of the war was more serious than it would have been later. The terror among the enemy, which was the strength of Israel, would at once cease with a gleam of success, and in that case the odds against Joshua would indeed be immense. Hitherto confident of victory, as the army of God, it seemed as if He had forsaken Israel, and "their hearts melted and became as water;" even Joshua, and the elders of the people, rending their clothes and putting dust on their heads in sign of profound mourning, and casting themselves on their faces before the Ark the whole day. A panic was on the point of setting in, if the people could not be roused and re-inspirited. But the cause of the disaster was presently disclosed. The whole of the spoil of Jericho had been solemnly devoted to destruction, as if the possession of any part of it would bring pollution, and the prohibition had been obeyed with remarkable exactness. There had, however, been one exception. A man of the tribe of Judah, unfortunately for all, had taken some gold and silver and a mantle of fine Mesopotamian manufacture,[1] contrary to

[1] Literally, "a mantle of Shinar." The looms of the Euphrates were famous in

orders. It was a military as well as religious offence, for Joshua had no doubt felt that to let his soldiers enrich themselves with the plunder of a wealthy city would weaken discipline, and dull the lofty enthusiasm which was their strength. The offender and his household, with all belonging to it, including even his cattle, were, therefore, at once separated from the camp; Achan being put to death, and his oxen, asses, and sheep destroyed, at the express command of God.[1] His body was then burnt, with the carcasses of the beasts, and all his property, and a huge cairn raised over them as a memorial. Some have thought that his wife and family were put to death with him, on the ground that his having buried the spoil in his tent implied their complicity in his crime, but the words do not seem to require this—the plural used referring, it may be, to his cattle of various kinds.[2] If, however, the family perished, we may be assured of their guilt, for otherwise they would doubtless, like the children of Korah, have been spared.[3]

The Valley of Achor, the scene of the tragedy, was, according to some, the name given to the part of the Wady Kelt at its opening, from the mountains of Judæa, on the slope of the Jordan plateau. It means "Valley of Sorrow," and there is a wady a little south of that of the Kelt, known as Wady Bueimat, "the door of death," though the name etymologically means "little owls," and it is fancied that

antiquity. "Assyrian garments," in later times, became a proverb. In the Nineveh sculptures the dress of the king consists of a long flowing garment descending to the ankles, elaborately embroidered, and edged with fringe and tassels. It was confined at the waist by a girdle, to which were attached cords with large tassels, falling down almost to the feet. Over this robe a second, nearly of the same length, but open in front, appears to have been thrown. It was also embroidered and edged with tassels. Layard's *Nineveh*, vol. ii. p. 319. See vol. i. p. 248. The discipline of the Hebrews must have been well-nigh perfect, when Achan alone yielded to the temptation to plunder.

[1] Josh. vii. 15.

[2] Köhler's *Lehrbuch*, p. 376. Hesse's *Joshua*, p. 102.

[3] Num. xxvi. 11.

the association of the owl with death and sorrow, as a bird of ill-omen and the harbinger of calamity, may account both for the etymological and the derived name given to the spot, as that on which Achan met his fate. It is usual, even at this time, among the Arabs of Palestine, to raise cairns over the bodies of women and thieves, or to throw them, as was done with Absalom, into a pit. Many of the cairns, examined during the survey, illustrated this custom, proving to have beneath them the decaying bodies of women, or of men slain in a fight, or shot while stealing. There is a huge cairn still to be seen in the Wady Bueimat, and as we find no mention of its ever having been removed, while we know that the spot was not cultivated, it seems natural that it should be still in existence, especially as this is the only cairn in that region, raised in a valley, a second one still met with being on the top of a hill.

The march to Ai up the narrow and often savage defile of the Kelt must have been an arduous effort, as it is a constant ascent over the worst of footing. The doomed town lay on the rounded top of a hill three thousand feet above the camp at Gilgal, and ten miles off in a straight line, though the only approach to it by the Wady Kelt, and then by the Wady Suweinit, past Michmash, was first east and then north, adding greatly to the distance. I was twice at Ai, and rode on a path, the old Roman road, along the side of the hill on the crest of which its remains are still to be seen; the wady by which Joshua's militia came up from the Jordan plateau bending down in a pleasant hollow, below, for near Ai the ground is better than usual. Coming from Bethel, you ride over terribly stony hills for a time; then along the Roman road, looking down into a wady with steep, rocky sides: the rock often coming to the surface in bare,

flat sheets which give little hold for the smooth feet of the horses. After a while the prospect improves. A village on the hill, to the left, looks as if the inhabitants were comfortably well to do, as indeed might be concluded from my finding, a mile from it, some peasants ploughing with oxen, while fig and olive trees dotted the slopes, and the valley opened into a comparatively fertile stretch. A well at the roadside, with a great stone on its mouth, and ruins seen at various points, carried the thoughts, meanwhile, to the long past. At last, two miles from Bethel, the hill on the left was seen to be surmounted by a great mound which marked the site of Ai, and was possibly the very heap raised over it, after its destruction, by Joshua. The capture was effected by him through a clever stratagem, which proves him to have been a skilful leader.

The whole district is full of deep hollows, and in some of these a force of 30,000 men was concealed behind the city, while another body of 5,000 showed itself in the ravine on the other side, and drew out the garrison after them by a pretended flight; the gates being left open and undefended. On this, at a signal given by Joshua, lifting up towards Ai the light spear which he always bore in his hand or kept slung at his back, the men in ambush pressed into the town, and, having set it on fire, came out at the front gates to intercept the garrison as they rushed back. But they were already lost; for the feigned retreat now turned into a fierce attack in front and rear. In a few hours nothing remained of Ai but the blackened stones. Before night its king had been put to death and exposed on one of the trees near the town[1] till nightfall, when the law required that the body

[1] Deut. xxi. 22, 23, requires that a body shall not hang on a tree after sunset. The body was thus impaled only after death.

should be taken down. As a final disgrace, it was then contemptuously buried under a great cairn of stones thrown by the host of the Hebrews at the entering in of the gate of the city. This practice is still observed, large cairns being erected over those slain in battle in Moab as they were in England in pre-historic times. It seems possible, indeed, that the great stone heap of El Tell, on the site of Ai, may be the very cairn heaped up over the unfortunate king at his town gates. With their chief, all the inhabitants, men and women to the number of 12,000, were put to the sword, but the Israelites were permitted, in this case, to retain the spoil and the cattle. Bethel, two miles north-west,[1] also fell now into Joshua's hands, though it was apparently afterwards retaken by the Canaanites.

A sure footing in the land had now been obtained, and such a dread of the invaders excited amongst the inhabitants as of itself made them resistless. Indeed, the population of Central Palestine seems to have fled before them, for no intimation of a struggle with them is found either in Joshua or Judges. Perhaps the subdivision into small communities, incapable of prompt united action, may have aided the general demoralization, and it is noticeable besides, that very few fortified towns are mentioned in this region.[2] But the terrible fate of Jericho and Ai sufficiently accounts for a universal panic, and abandonment of all, before the advancing Hebrews. There seems, indeed, to be an allusion to such a general flight, in a verse of Isaiah.[3] "In that day," says he, "his strong cities shall be as the forsaken tract of the woodland and of the summits, which men forsook because of the

[1] Bethel lay 2,890 feet above the sea. *Great Pal. Map.*

[2] Josh. ii. 9, 24; v. 1; ix. 9, 24. In the list of conquered cities in chap. xii., there are none in Central Palestine except Ai and Bethel. See vol. i. p. 306.

[3] Isa. xvii. 9.

children of Israel;"[1] words which the Septuagint renders, more explicitly, "the cities will be forsaken, as the Amorites and the Hittites forsook theirs before the sons of Israel." Some of the fugitives seem even to have emigrated to Africa, if we can trust the statement of Procopius[2] that two marble pillars were to be seen in the Numidian town Tigisis, with a Phœnician inscription, in these terms: "We are those who fled from the face of Jesus (Joshua) the robber, the son of Nun." Suidas[3] states this also; giving the words as, "We are Canaanites, whom Jesus the robber drove out," and the Talmud states that the Girgasites driven out by Joshua wandered to Africa.[4] The fierce measures at Jericho and Ai, like Cromwell's storming of Drogheda, had, nevertheless, proved more merciful in the end than a gentler course could have been. Joshua could have said, as Cromwell did after Drogheda: "I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God, and that it will tend to prevent the effusion of blood for the future,"[5] for this sternness ended the Irish war. Had the Israelites followed up with vigour their first successes, nothing could have hindered their crushing all opposition, and rendering themselves absolute masters of the whole of Palestine for all time to come. But they left their work half done, and paid a heavy penalty in consequence.

Such amazing success opened the way soon after for an incident without parallel in the history of any other nation. God had commanded, through Moses,[6] that the tribes should,

[1] So Gesenius and Ewald. Thus, many Israelite cities were abandoned after the defeat of Gilboa. 1 Sam. xxxi. 7.

[2] *De Bello Vandalico*, ii. 10. [3] *s. v.* Χαναάν.

[4] *Jerus. Tr. Schebiit*, vi. 36 c. Ewald rejects the story of Procopius, but Graetz accepts it.

[5] Carlyle's *Cromwell*, ii. 152.

[6] Deut. xii. 5.

as soon as practicable, assemble at Shechem, in the centre of the land, to renew their allegiance to Him, and to hear once more the proclamation of the conditions on which He gave them the country. Accordingly, all the nation, including the women and the children, and even the multitude of other races which had come up with them from Egypt, were led on a stupendous pilgrimage, from the banks of the Jordan at Gilgal, to the valley between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, in the midland hills. It was a spot sacred in the history of Israel, for there Abraham and Jacob had in turn pitched their tents, and there the latter had bought the field in which they were now to bury the mummy of Joseph, as he had commanded their forefathers, hundreds of years before. The well that Jacob had dug was also before their eyes, and the oak beneath which he had buried the idolatrous images and ear-rings of his encampment. The valley itself, perhaps the most beautiful spot in Palestine, was worthy of the great national act they had assembled to perform. Running east and west, with a width of from a quarter to half a mile, it is hemmed in between the twin mountains Ebal and Gerizim, the summits of which are two miles apart, in a line. Bright rivulets, fed, as the natives say, by no fewer than eighty springs, run down the slopes and sparkle over the sunny glen; gardens surround the walls of Nablous, the modern representative of Shechem, which nestles close under the shadow of Gerizim; and leafy figs, walnuts, mulberries, oranges, lemons, pomegranates, vines, and plums, enclose it in verdant beauty. Gerizim towers 1,000 feet above the valley, on its south side, in huge steps of light-coloured limestone, full of caves, surmounted by dark blue masses of the same stone rising in ledges and shelves to the summit. Ebal, on the north side, rises two

hundred feet above Gerizim, in a gentler slope of steel-blue rock, with precipitous cliffs atop; its north side, like that of the other hill, rich in springs, from the dip of the strata, but its south, even when richly covered with corn in summer, dependent on rain and irrigation for its fertility. In spring thousands of flowers of every colour amongst the grass, in the valley itself and on the slopes, in the meadows and over the open ground, make the spot still more delightful. Indeed, wherever water reaches, either naturally or otherwise, it is paradise, nearly all the year round, but where water fails, the barrenness is well-nigh complete. Yet it is a wondrous valley in the thirsty East.

The ascent of Gerizim is made on horseback, from its western side, but I found part of it very steep indeed. Gardens, belonging to the citizens of Nablous, ran up the hill for some distance; a strong rush of bright water, in which women were washing their household linen, men performing their ablutions, and children paddling, flows westward behind the houses: grain was waving on terraces, often built at parts so steep that it seemed a wonder their walls could be raised at all; vines, figs, and olives were waving wherever there was room, far up the mountain sides. The track of ascent was, however, very stony and quite wild. On the top there is a long, undulating stretch before you get to the eastern end, much of the space being sown with grain, or ploughed, though there were reaches of bare rock. The east end is crowned with the ruins of a castle and church, the date of which is uncertain, but must have been early. The walls of the castle are nine feet thick, and enclose a great piece of ground, two hundred and thirty feet by one hundred and eighty. There is also a great reservoir, one hundred and twenty feet by sixty. The view from the

castle was one of the finest I saw in Palestine. To the north rose the bare side of Ebal, terraced where possible, with gardens of prickly pear on the lower ledges, and corn on the higher, though, as a whole, the mountain rose gray and desolate. The water for the vegetation is obtained from cisterns, there being, as I have said, no springs on the south side. Between the two mountains was the smiling valley, Joseph's tomb, marked by its mosque, Jacob's well, and just outside Ebal, facing east, the village of Sychar, from which the woman of Samaria came; on the east, north, and south, the grand expanse of the plain of Muknah, with island-like knolls, crowned with villages and clumps of olives and figs; green patches, brown ploughland, and gray pasture filling up the broad open. Then, looking east, a sea of low, round hills, well cultivated and rough with olives and figs. On the west lay Joppa, thirty-six miles off, at the sea, and to the east the chasm of the Jordan at a distance of eighteen miles.

I did not go up Mount Ebal, but the view from it is even finer than from Mount Gerizim. On the north one sees Safed, the city set on a hill, and snowy Hermon, flashing in the upper sky, with Thirza, once the capital of the northern kingdom, on a very steep hill; on the west, Joppa and the sea; on the south, the hills over Bethel; and on the east, the eye ranges over the great table-land beyond the Jordan. On the top there is a ruin over ninety feet square, with walls twenty feet thick of unhewn stones, without mortar, and the remains of chambers ten feet square inside. What could this place have been?

There is no trace, I may say, on Mount Gerizim, of the old Samaritan Temple, but the hill is still sacred to the remnant of Samaritans surviving in Nablous.

Having selected huge stones, and made them smooth with a coating of "plaster," Joshua caused an abstract of the Law to be inscribed on them, and then set them up on Mount Ebal.[1] An altar of unhewn stones was next raised, close by them, that their erection might be consecrated by burnt sacrifices and peace offerings. The tribes which had sprung up from the lawful wives of Jacob then took up their place on Mount Ebal, while those descended from the handmaids of Leah and Rachel, with Reuben and Zebulun, stood on Mount Gerizim, the priests, with the Ark, occupying the valley between the two hills, surrounded by the elders, officers, and judges of the nation. The whole Law, as given by Moses, was now read aloud to the vast multitude—those on Mount Ebal responding with a loud Amen to the rehearsal of the curses for disobedience, and those on Mount Gerizim, similarly, to the recital of the blessings for obedience. Such a scene transacted[2] about twelve hundred years before the first Punic War,[3] and one thousand years before Socrates,[4] is unique in the history of the world; for when did any other nation thus pledge itself to a high religious life as the recognized condition of its prosperity? Even the curses pronounced are peculiar to Israel; for they are directed not only against such crimes as murder, but also against idolatry; disobedience to parents; inhumanity to the blind, to strangers, widows, or orphans; or the removal of the landmark of a neighbour. Modern legislation is slowly striving towards a standard so generous, pure, and lofty.

[1] Kiepert's Map gives the heights above the Mediterranean as: Ebal, 2,990 feet; the valley, 1,853 feet; Gerizim, 2,828 feet. The Palestine survey gives 2,848.8 feet for Gerizim, and 3,076.5 for Ebal. Deut. xxvii. 4.

[2] The table in Schenkel's *Bibel Lexicon* gives B.C. 1420 as the date of the Conquest of Palestine. Ewald assigns B.C. 1460 as the date.

[3] B.C. 264–241.

[4] *b.* B.C. 469–8, *d.* B.C. 399.

That the laws should have been inscribed on plaster may seem ill fitted to secure their permanent preservation, but the dryness of the climate makes even such material as lasting as the hardest stone elsewhere. The inscriptions on the rocks at Sinai, though only surface scratches, are as distinct as ever, after perhaps two thousand years; and in Egypt inscriptions and paintings, on plaster, are still, after the lapse of even longer periods, as perfect as when first made.

A difficulty has been raised as to the possibility of the voice being heard over the space required by so great a multitude, but the clear dry air of the East carries sounds to great distances. I had not myself an opportunity of testing the range of the voice from Ebal or Gerizim, but many travellers have found that the Bible narrative is strictly in accordance with their own experience.

"On a perfectly clear and windless day in spring," says a very recent traveller, "I stationed two persons on Mount Ebal, myself and an attendant on Mount Gerizim, and several persons in the valley between the mountains. Reading aloud from a height of seven hundred feet above our little audience, not only did they hear our words distinctly and we their Amens, but each speaker heard the words of the other speaker across a distance of fully half a mile."[1] In the same way, at Masada, Tristram tells us, he and a friend could not only carry on a conversation with a third person at more than six hundred yards distance, but several of the remarks made by Dr. Tristram and his friend to each other were distinctly heard.[2]

Having thus formally consecrated themselves once more to Jehovah, and having taken possession of Palestine in His

[1] Rev. Dr. Winslow, in *Palestine Exploration Fund Reports*, Jan., 1891, p. 79.
[2] *Land of Moab*, p. 83. See also *Pal. Fund Rep.*, 1870, p. 58.

name, subject to the condition of obedience to His Law, which He imposed—the vast multitude returned to Gilgal, which was still the headquarters of the tribes. But the lengthened interval of quiet which had followed the first victories was presently to be rudely disturbed. The conquest of the central district had alarmed the numerous petty kings of the Negeb and of the western lowlands, and led them for a time to league together, to drive back the invaders beyond the Jordan.

Meanwhile some of the Canaanite towns in the district north of Jerusalem, terrified by the success and the stern measures of the Hebrews, hastened to submit to Joshua. Foremost among these was Gibeon, the "high town," a royal city, "greater than Ai," and famous for the valour of its citizens.[1] Its modern representative, a large village, stands on an isolated, flat-topped, low height, about six miles north-west of Jerusalem, on an open plain, not far from the top of the pass of Beth-horon, by which the central country is approached, in that part, from the lowlands on the coast. It was thus a place of high importance for the defence alike of the hill country from attacks by an enemy from the sea plain, and of that fertile region from invasion by an assailant from the hills. The height on which it is perched is of a striking form, the yellowish-white limestone of which it consists rising in horizontal layers, with exposed edges, in successive steps, each of which forms a terrace richly planted with olives, figs, and other fruit trees. The space on the top could never have given room for a large town, according to our ideas, and this may help to measure the importance of the Canaanite towns of which it was the head, as the largest among them. There are still,

[1] Josh. x. 2.

however, massive ruins on the hill which speak of its ancient strength and importance, though they date, for the most part, if not entirely, from the time of the Crusades. Under the hill, on the east, north, and west sides is a rich and well-tilled valley; the property of the villagers. On the east rise, at no great distance, the rounded swells on which stood Rama and Gibea of Saul. North-west a fine plain stretches out. On the south-west an olive plantation separates the hill from its lower wave, beyond. The straight furrows in the black fields, alternating with green, are very pleasant to see, and the terraces, which are chiefly on the east side, add to the attractiveness. Several springs flow out from them, the sources from which the "pool of Gibeon" was supplied. It is now dry, however, but it must have deserved its name of "the great water of Gibeon," in old times, for it measures one hundred and twenty feet in length and one hundred in breadth.

With this "city" were allied three others—Chephirah, "the hamlet," about eight miles north-west from Jerusalem —now called Kefirah; Beeroth, "the wells," or "springs," now Birch, on the main track from Jerusalem to Shechem and the north, still a fairly large village, looking down from a hill in a stony and barren neighbourhood, about nine miles north of the Holy City, and boasting about seven hundred Mohammedan inhabitants; and Kiriath-jearim, which Dr. Robinson proposed to identify with a village seven and one-half miles from Jerusalem, on the Jaffa road, but which Conder thinks he has rediscovered in a ruin called "Erma," about twelve miles from the Holy City, near Bethshemesh. Of this league Gibeon was the soul, and it deserved to be so from its diplomatic cleverness. Dressing up some of its people in old clothes, and clouted shoes, as if they had

come from a great distance and had worn out everything in slow course; hard, mouldy bread was carried in "old sacks," probably the hair-cloth bags in which Orientals pack up, for convenient transport on the backs of animals, all they need for a journey, including their tent-cover, pots, provisions, etc.; their "wine bottles" were wine-skins, such as are still used, consisting of the entire skin of a goat or other creature, and these, as if they had been long used, were patched or tied up with cords—altogether, it seemed as if they had come from some very distant part, and they carried out the deception so well in representing themselves to have done so, that Joshua made peace with them and promised them their lives. Three days later, however, the trick they had played came to light, and raised a fierce murmuring against their chiefs among the Hebrews. But the oath sworn could not be retracted. They must be spared in spite of the thirst for their blood on the part of the host, but they would have no more, at least, than their bare lives, for they were solemnly cursed by Joshua, and sentenced to be henceforth, in all their generations, slaves of the meanest kind, wood-cutters and water-carriers, to the conquering race.

That the Gibeonite confederacy should have voluntarily submitted to Joshua, without fighting, was very alarming to all the local chiefs, far and near, for the possession of their small territories gave the Hebrew leader the command of the pass of Beth-horon, and threatened to make it easy for him to cut off, in detail, all who might venture to oppose him, even on the wide and rich sea-coast plain. Taking advantage, therefore, of Joshua's absence at Gilgal, the chiefs, or "kings," of Jerusalem; of Hebron, twenty miles south of it; of Jarmuth, or Yarmuth, some miles south-west of it;

of Lachish, seventeen miles east of Gaza, on the mound now called El Hasy, a strongly fortified town ; and of Eglon, a town sixteen miles north-east of Gaza—five in all, each with its petty district, banded together, and pressing up into the hill country, doubtless by the pass of Beth-horon, invested Gibeon, the elders of which instantly sent word to Joshua, at Gilgal, demanding help. Acting with quick decision, he set off at once on receiving the summons, climbing all night up the Wady Kelt, with its gray, mountain-high cliffs, frowning narrow gorges, and wildly rough footing, by a forced march, at the head of a large force of chosen men, and before dawn reached the open, rolling ground from which Gibeon rises, on its hill, more than three thousand feet above Gilgal. On this wide space the host of the kings had encamped. The sudden appearance of the Hebrews, at sunrise, where all had been security when they lay down at last nightfall, threw the "Amorite" bands into the wild panic of a surprise. The remembrance of Jericho and Ai, with the massacres that followed ; the impression made by such ominous vigour as had brought peril on them so swiftly where they had no dream of danger ; the sight of a foe before whom none had hitherto been able to stand ; their loud and terrible war-cries, and rushing onset, at once filled all hearts in the camp of the allies with dismay. Headlong flight, to save their lives, was the only thought. Away, in dire confusion, the whole force rushed towards the pass by which they had mounted from the sea-plain. It was the pass of Beth-horon, "the hollow way," or "pass," rough as well as steep even now, but then, and in all after days of Jewish history, the "king's way" from the hills to the lowlands. Here, in long after days, Judas Maccabæus overcame the Syrian general, Nicanor, and by this rude track St. Paul was led as a pris-

oner, on his night march to Cæsarea. Here, also, in earlier times, the Philistines often found their way when invading Israel in the days of Saul.[1] The pass begins about twelve miles south-west of Bethel, and sinks to the north-west for nearly two miles, till it opens beyond the hills, on the wide and gentle slopes of Ajalon, whence the way to the lowlands, still nine hundred feet below, is easy. Looking down, from the top of the pass, where a village, the Upper Beth-horon, still survives, the track winds down the hill by an open path, and enters on its direct course to the sea-plain only after leaving behind it a broad valley dotted on its slopes with olives; dry stone walls, and shapeless hedges of prickly pear, enclosing patches of grain, or clumps of fruit trees, and varied by gentle slopes and narrow levels, growing only thorny wild shrubs, and thick with loose stones, till the last bend of the hills shuts off its approach to Ajalon. Seen close at hand, however, as one goes down, the descent from the upper village to the lower, two miles below, is very rough, after fairly entering on the pass. The track runs, at times, over wide sheets of smooth rock, and, at others, over the upturned edges of the limestone strata, or over stretches of square stones laid in past ages as a causeway, or down steps rudely cut in the rocks. It takes an hour to climb from the lower village to the higher, and one feels that either in ascending or descending, a hostile force would fare ill at the hands of a determined enemy, whether defending the pass, or pursuing a retreating host. Even as you come near the lower village, it is hard to get over the beds of stones which lie deep on the track, and it is only beyond it that the footing becomes easy, and the country opens.

Rushing in headlong confusion, a torrent of panic-stricken

[1] 1 Sam. xiii. 18. 1 Macc. vii. 39. Acts xxiii. 31.

fugitives, down this long, difficult descent, equal to that of a height of three thousand feet, the terror of the crowd was increased by one of the sudden and terrible storms not unfrequent in Palestine; great hailstones striking down fiercely on them as they fled. What such an outburst of hail implies may be judged from an instance told by Commodore Porter of a hail-storm which broke over him and his party while he was crossing the Bosphorus in a boat. One of the boatmen had his hand literally smashed, a second was much injured in the shoulder, and the others were all more or less hurt. One hailstone broke the blade of an oar. Two men were killed on shore, and many had limbs broken. Some of the pieces of ice picked up were over a pound in weight, and many three-quarters of a pound. A letter I received lately from an English gentleman in Iowa is equally striking. The crops, says he, promised extremely well. Then came a hail-storm, at the end of August, which entirely wiped out of existence all the standing crops, killed sheep, geese, and poultry by the hundreds, and left the miserable farmers with nothing to live upon through the winter. Hail-storms of extreme severity are sometimes caused in Syria and Palestine, at unwonted times, as with us, by a sudden blast of cold freezing what would otherwise have been rain, and such a storm broke on the bewildered "Amorites" now. Then occurred that incident which had already been the theme of the poets of Israel before the Book of Joshua was written, and had been recorded in the "Book of Jasher," or "the Upright,"[1] apparently a collec-

[1] The Book of Jasher is also alluded to in 2 Sam. i. 18: "Also he—David—bade them teach the children of Israel the (song of the) bow: behold, it is written in the Book of Jasher." The quotation from this book apparently ends at the close of verse 15, for it is evident that Joshua did not return to Gilgal immediately after the battle, but only after the campaign to the south country had closed (ver. 43). In

tion of odes in praise of the heroes of Israel. The hills behind the Hebrew leader hid Gibeon, but the sun was still high above them, coming westward, and the pale moon, then in its third quarter, showed white and faint through the storm. Darkness, it was to be feared, would come all too soon, and stop the pursuit, and the foe would get through the pass without its defeat being crushing and final. The moment, to a man of Joshua's cast, must have been felt to be one of supreme importance, and, as a quotation from an ancient record of the brave deeds of the Tribes —the Book of Jasher—tells us, his emotion took utterance, as was fitting with such a man, in an appeal to God to aid him. "Sun," cried he, as this old-world extract informs us; "stand thou still upon Gibeon, come no farther to the west; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon," where light to pursue would be sorely needed. "And," adds the quotation, "the sun stood still and the moon stayed, until the

explanation of the passage, Mr. Groser, Secretary of the Sunday-school Union, says, verses 12 to 15, "as extracts from *recognized* poetry, should assuredly be treated as such. If the literal meaning were put on other passages of a similar kind, the result would be striking; as, for example, Deborah says that 'the stars in their courses fought against Sisera,' or 'the hills melted like wax at the presence of the Lord.'" The Rev. Samuel Cox thinks the true explanation is that Joshua besought God that the black clouds of the storm driving up the pass from the sea might not be allowed to blot out the sun and thus bring night prematurely, before his victory was complete. When the sun shone out again from the tempest, and the moon stood clear in the sky, his prayer would be answered.

"It is astonishing," says Herder, "that this fine passage has been so long misunderstood. Joshua attacked the Amorites in the early morning, and the battle continued till night; that is, for a long day which seemed to protract itself into night, to complete the victory. The sun and moon were witnesses of Joshua's great deeds, and held their course in the midst of heaven till the triumph was perfect. Who does not recognize this as poetry, even if it had not been quoted from the Book of Poems on Heroes? In the usual language of the Hebrews such expressions were neither bold nor unusual." *Heb. Poesie*, vol. i. p. 237.

Agamemnon, in the *Iliad*, utters the same prayer as Joshua:

> "Jove greatest, Jove most glorious, sky dweller, cloud bedight,
> Let not the sun nor darkness fall and wrap the world in night,
> Till Priam's stately palace I cast in ruin low."—*Iliad*, ii. 412.

people had avenged themselves on their enemies."[1] Such an extract from a book of poetical exaltation of national heroes, is to be interpreted in keeping with its source, nor need we ascribe to Scripture the words it uses. Quoted as poetry, it is to be treated as such, so far as a literal explanation is concerned, for it would be quite without justification to suppose that the earth ceased from revolving on its axis, with all the universal destruction of such a checking of its awful speed in revolution. In the polar regions, the refraction of the light, in cold clear air, often makes the sun visible for days together, though it has never risen above the horizon, while thus apparently shining in the heavens. Such a phenomenon, especially when the air was chilled by a storm, may possibly have led to the outburst of the Hebrew poet in his celebration of the great victory gained by Joshua. Meanwhile the wild uproar of pursuer and pursued swept down the rough pass, lower and lower, till the foot-hills were reached; the link between the central table-land and the sea-plain. At last, however, the five emirs who had commanded the allied invaders sought refuge, utterly exhausted and despairing, in a cave at Makkedah, on the edge of the lowlands, identified by Sir C. Warren as El Mùghar, which is the only place in the neighbourhood where there are caves. Indeed, there is one in which, strange to say, there are five places for bodies: it having been at one time used as a rock tomb. The hollows are rudely scooped out in the limestone. Two other caves could let five men crowd into them, and yet have entrance so small that they could easily be blocked up by some of the "great stones" which lie everywhere round. The spot is fertile, corn-fields stretching away east and west. It is about eight miles from Ram-

[1] Josh. x. 11, 13.

leh. But this hiding-place did not save them, for they were presently tracked to it; and blocked up in it by a great stone rolled to its mouth, and, doubtless, duly guarded while the fierce chase of the fugitives continued. The great Maritime Plain had now been reached, with its numerous fortified cities, and in these the few who had escaped at length found safety for the time. Then, and not till then, Joshua returned, and having taken the five kings from their rude prison, after making his chief men place their feet on their necks, as a sign of triumph over enemies lately so dreaded, himself speared or ran them through, and ordered their dead bodies, as a mark of additional dishonour, to be hung up on trees till the evening, when they were taken down, as the Jewish law required,[1] and thrown ignominiously into the cave.

Having, in his pursuit of the allied chiefs, reached the fertile sea-plain and the pleasant slopes of the foot-hills of the Shephelah, Joshua was too good a general to retire before having followed up his victory till the enemy was humbled beyond the power of soon attacking him again. Ajalon, which he crossed, still marks the prevailing nationality of the leaders routed by the Hebrews, in the name of its inhabitants, who are known to the local Arabs as the Amarin, or as El Amar, the very name of the Amorites in the Egyptian inscriptions. They still till the ground as rudely as in early ages, and preserve their grain in cisterns hewn out underground, in the limestone of the region. Thence he swept on against any towns or villages he felt strong enough to attack. The strongest of these seems to have been Lachish, an Amorite town of which the mound Tel el Hesy, seventeen miles east of Gaza, is now the only memorial left. There is not now a house in sight from it, but only straggling

[1] Deut. xxi. 23.

groups of low brown tents. The artificial mound is from sixty to eighty feet high, and it stands on a hill forty-five feet high, making a height in all of one hundred and twenty feet, but cut away on one side by a torrent bed, full in winter. It is two hundred feet square, and shews at the bottom the old Amorite wall of brick-work some twenty-eight feet thick, dating back to a period before the Exodus. There are natural ridges enclosing it, at a short distance, and a slight valley to the south of it. The mound is artificial, and shews successive levels of successive towns; river-worn stones being laid down for floors and pavement; and the whole surface atop cultivated. From top to bottom there are countless fragments of pottery, and outside of the town, on the south-west, is a sand-hill in which many pots are, apparently, unintentionally buried, consisting generally of jars, with a basin or cup on the top, and frequently with a smaller vase inside; all filled with the clean white sand on which they lie. This cemetery pottery is mainly little brown flasks, which the explorers have been able to refer to the age of the Hebrew Judges. Strong though this place was, it must have been an easy prey to Joshua, its fighting men having been killed or scattered in the rout of Beth-horon. The results of the exploration of the mound show strikingly the troubled life of ancient times.

"I can find," says Mr. Petrie, "nine successive wallings: a huge Amorite wall twenty-eight feet thick; two Amorite rebuildings on that; then there is a period of no walls, but ruined habitations of rough stone, overthrown and spread about, probably of the Judges' period. Then a fairly stout wall, thirteen feet thick, which must be Rehoboam's; then four small walls, rebuilt on the ruins of that, by different kings; and, lastly, a thin and hasty wall, on the top of all,

which must, I think, be due to Josiah, when he tried to keep out Hophra, in 610 B.C."

Besides Lachish, Joshua, we are told, at this time overwhelmed the kings of Jarmuth, now unknown; Eglon, now a mound, with ruins; Debir, known also as Kiriath Sephar, a little south-west of Hebron—now known as Dhareriyeh—a place of curious interest, as it seems to have been the seat of an order of scribes and literary men, who busied themselves in the production of cuneiform documents, such as we find in the Tel Amarna relics sent from Palestine to Egypt. Libnah, also, fell, a village not far, it would seem, from Lachish; and Kadesh Barnea, far in the desert to the south, where Joshua had, with Moses, lived so long during the Wanderings. Other places not mentioned no doubt fell also. Indeed, we are told that Joshua smote all the land, the (central) hill country, and the uplands stretching away as "the Negeb" or dry land, far to the south, and the foot-hills and slopes of the Shephelah—but the fact is not told that the Hebrews carefully avoided a trial of strength with the Philistines, whose cities were the chief stronghold of the sea-plain, or failed to take them if they tried, for they had no triumph to record over either Ekron, Ashdod, Gath, Askalon, or Gaza—the great prizes of the scene of their invasion—nor did they take, so far as we know, Gerar or Bethlehem, or Beersheba, which were all in their way. The campaign, indeed, was evidently a mere rush, bearing down before it what it could, but leaving behind what required any delay or special aids of military attack. Gath was only taken, at last, in the time of David; Askalon, Gaza, and Ekron were won for a time in the days of the Judges,[1] but presently lost; but Ashdod was never

[1] Judg. i. 18.

gained by the Hebrews. It took many generations, in fact, to end the wars begun by Joshua, although he seems everywhere to have carried out his plan of extermination.[1] Strange to say, in the tablets from Tel Amarna we seem to have recovered a notice of this constant warfare with the Canaanites. Mention of a people, the Abiri, who seem to be the Hebrews, occurs more than once, informing us that they constantly swooped down from the central hills, on the sea-plain, and in one of these raids had taken Gaza from the Egyptian governor. The victories of two of their chiefs, Arad and Ebed Tob, are referred to, and no doubt they were only two out of many fierce captains in these terrible days of blood and strife.[2]

The light thrown on Palestine history from Egypt, at this early day, is very curious. At Tel Amarna were unearthed, two years ago, the despatches of Egyptian governors and allies from various parts of Syria. They date from the latter part of the fifteenth century B.C., when the conquests of Thothmes III. were being lost by King Khu-n-Aaten. These letters, written in the Syrian dialect for the most part, are in the cuneiform script, seeming to shew that the Phœnician alphabet was at this early period not yet in use, and they shew, moreover, that Egypt had set up native governors throughout Palestine and Syria, the names of many well-known towns held by them, such as Tyre, Sidon, Gaza, etc., occurring on the tablets. The Egyptian government was at this time threatened by the Hittites in the north and other enemies in the south; and many of the letters speak of revolts and disasters, and appeals to Egypt for help. These records seem to belong to the time when Joshua was conquering Palestine; a fierce, unsettled period, when the gov-

[1] Josh. x. 28–43.

[2] *Palestine Explor. Fund*, 1890, p. 326.

ernors of the south speak of revolts caused, and cities taken by the Abiri; a name almost identical with "Hebrew," and points like it to their "passing over" either the Euphrates or the Jordan.

It illustrates strikingly the murderous ferocity of ancient warfare, that the only spot where the name "Canaan" still survives is as the name of a hamlet near Hebron, identified with the fortified post of Kanäna taken by Seti I., father of Rameses II. There is no difficulty in its site on the hills, for there were Canaanites dwelling in the hill country of that very region,[1] even at Hebron itself, and one great Canaanitish king had his headquarters at Arad, in the hills, about sixteen miles south of Khŭrbet Kan'ân. The Egyptian records inform us, further, that Rameses III. built a fortified temple at Kanäna, whither the people of the land brought their tribute. This was probably in the days of the Judges, and it agrees well with the insolence of the Philistines towards the Hebrews at that time; their intimacy with the Egyptians, whose enemies, auxiliaries, and allies they were in rapid succession, emboldening them to act thus haughtily.

The campaign was at last ended, leaving behind it ruined towns and a wilderness without people, where there had been crowded towns and villages, and Joshua then led back his force to Gilgal on the Jordan, which was still his headquarters.

The centre and the south of Palestine had now been conquered, and the Israelites had secured a solid footing in the land. But the north had not yet been invaded, and there were Canaanite communities in different parts that had hitherto escaped the brunt of war. The destruction of

[1] Num. xiv. 45.

Jericho; the sacking and burning of Ai and Bethel; the submission of Gideon and its confederate towns; the surrender of Central Palestine by the flight of its inhabitants; the crushing defeat of the southern kings, and the seizure of their territory, shewed that the Hebrew occupation threatened the whole land. A final league of native chiefs, whose populations still furnished the materials of a fighting host, was therefore formed, to stem the invasion, if possible. The head of this confederation was Jabin, "he whom God watches," king of Hazor, "the enclosed," or "fortified," in the northern hills, near Kadesh of Naphtali, and half way between the sea-coast and Lake Merom. Invitations to join a general rising were sent out by him to the chiefs of Madon, a place possibly represented by the ruin Madin, west of the Sea of Galilee, and close to Hattin; of Shimron, the present village Semunieh, five miles west of Nazareth; and of Achshaph, the existing village El Yasif, in the tribe of Asher, six miles north-east of Acre; to the far-off chiefs on the north, in the mountains, towards Lebanon; to those in the Ghor of the Jordan, south of the Sea of Galilee; to those in the lowlands and elsewhere, and to Dor, a city on the coast, eight miles north of Cæsarea, near Mount Carmel; to all the Canaanites, in fact, east and west; to the Amorites, Hittites, and Perizzites throughout the land; to the Jebusites in the hill country; and to the Hivites under Mount Hermon in the north. All, alike, eagerly embraced the opportunity of making one last grand struggle to crush the invader. It was a final and supreme effort, like that of our forefathers in Northumberland, after the defeat of Senlac. A host gathered, "as the sand that is upon the sea-shore in multitude," with a great force of chariots and horses, which Israel had only footmen to oppose. The ren-

dezvous of this great confederation was appointed on the plains east of Lake Merom, the present El Huleh, half-way between the Sea of Galilee and the mountains of Lebanon, and there they speedily gathered.

But Joshua, though now a man of about ninety, was equal to the emergency. The tribes, who were still encamped at Gilgal, ready for battle at any moment, were called out at once, and, by a swift and secret march, succeeded in taking the foe by surprise, which, as usual in an Eastern army, led to a precipitate and confused flight. Then, once more, came the fierce pursuit and relentless slaughter for thirty miles, straight north, over the hills, probably by the camel path still used, past Laish, the future Dan, and Ijon; then over the cleft of the Leontes, north-west, as far as Sidon and Misrephoth-maim,[1] on the coast, with its limekilns and smelting furnaces. Nor did it end till Mizpeh, the watch-tower, far off, probably the glorious plain which lies between the two ranges of Lebanon, was reached.

An ordinary army, after such a victory, would have prized, above all else, the opportunity of putting themselves on an equal footing with their enemy, by utilizing the captured horses and chariots, they themselves having none. But the enthusiasm of the Israelites set no value on such human aid. They believed that the invisible chariots of God were amongst them. One of their inspired poets at a later date only embodied the feelings of Joshua's host, when he sang:

"The Almighty scattered kings in it;
It was white (with the robes or armour of the slain) as snow on Mount Salmon;

[1] Apparently the ancient Sarepta, now known as Sarafem. (The word means "burnings by the waters.") Possibly the southern peak of Mount Gerizim. Judg. ix. 48, 49. Yet that has no snow. Some other hill may, therefore, be meant.

> The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands twice told over;
> Jehovah is among them." [1]

As through many subsequent generations of warriors, one sentiment animated every bosom, while the host swept on to the charge, or met that of their foes:

> "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses;
> But we will remember the name of Jehovah, our God." [2]

The battle was "not theirs but God's," [3] and, as in the past, the horses were crippled and the chariots burnt.[4] Jabin's capital, Hazor, was levelled with the ground, but the towns which stood on hills were preserved, for the use of the victors themselves, as more easily defensible. The spoil of the cities and towns, moreover, and their cattle, were distributed among the conquerors; the women and children taken as slaves, but the male prisoners put to death, as was the hideous custom of the age.

Thus, in the words of Scripture,[5] Israel had received from God "great and goodly and strong cities which they had not built; houses full of all good things, which they had not filled; wells dug, which they had not digged; vineyards and olive trees which they had not planted; fruit trees in abundance, and a fat land."

The division, among the tribes, of the territory thus gained, was the next great work. Five or seven years had passed since the crossing of the Jordan,[6] and their leader was "still as strong as in the day when Moses had sent him, forty-five years before, from Kadesh Barnea, to spy out the

[1] Ps. lxviii. 14, 17.
[2] Ps. xx. 7.
[3] 1 Sam. xvii. 47. 2 Chron. xx. 15.
[4] Josh. xi. 6.
[5] Deut. vi. 10, 11. See also Neh. ix. 25.
[6] Josh. xiv. 10. Diestel, in Riehm (p. 770), thinks the war lasted seven years. So does Lengerke (*Kenaan*), p. 647.

land."[1] A great popular assembly was held at Gilgal,[2] under the presidency of Joshua, Eleazar the high priest, and the elders. Two and a half tribes had already secured their share of the conquests, on the east of the Jordan, and thus nine and a half had to be provided for. Over all these the great tribe of Joseph, divided into the two sections of Ephraim and Manasseh, claimed precedence, at once from their descent, and from the fact that Joshua belonged to their number. They demanded, therefore, the best part of the country—the central hills, which are specially rich in water and very fruitful, and apparently acted at once, of their own accord, in the matter; Ephraim taking possession of the part north and south of Shechem, with its green hills and rich valleys. Shechem[3] itself, where the bones of Joseph were now buried, and where Abraham and Jacob had long encamped, thus became their chief town, and, from its central position, in a measure the capital of the whole country. The half tribe of Manasseh, which had abandoned tent life, and thrown in its lot with Ephraim, had the district immediately to the north of this, but they were cramped in their limits by the presence of Canaanite fortresses in the rich plain of Esdraelon, which they coveted. Assuming that Joshua, as one of themselves, would not refuse, the united "House of Joseph," therefore, asked him to let the other tribes help them to drive out the enemy. But he was less pliable than they had hoped. "The hill country is not enough for us," said they, "and all the Canaanites that dwell in the valley-land have chariots of iron, both they of Bethshean (in the rich Jordan depression, east of Gilboa) and her towns, and they who are of the plain of Esdraelon." "Thou art a great people," replied the

[1] Josh. xiv. 7, 11. [2] Josh. xiv. 6. [3] See vol. i. p. 412.

hoary leader, with subdued irony, "and hast great power; thou shalt not have one lot only. The hill country shall be thine; it is now covered with scrub and rough growths, but thou shalt cut them down;[1] even its outlying parts shall be thine; for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong."[2] Disappointed, thus, in their selfish schemes, they contented themselves with what they had received.

The breaking up of the great camp by this separation of the tribe of Joseph from it, was the signal for the rest to take similar care for their own future. Four tribes turned their eyes to the north, and four to the south; finding, it may be, the land northward opened to them in a measure by the victory over Jabin; if, indeed, the campaign against him was not a deliberate invasion of his territories, by Naphtali and Asher, to secure the districts allotted them.[3] As the result, the four northern tribes more or less fully obtained homes in their respectively assigned bounds, though in no case without need of long-continued petty warfare, or the purchase of quiet by consenting to share the soil with the original population and to enter into friendly relations with them. The policy of extermination could not but fail, for no race is ever literally annihilated by any conquest, and hence there remained only the possibility of enslaving the survivors, or of living on equal terms with them, or submitting, in the end, to be their dependents. Naphtali and Asher occupied, between them, the glorious hill country of Upper Galilee from where it sinks down into the Jordan on the east, and to the Phœnician sea-plain on the west: Asher holding more or less of the district running

[1] The word translated "a wood" is "yaar," which means only the stunted growths still seen in all neglected parts of the hill country in Palestine. See the indexes.

[2] Josh. xvii. 16-18.

[3] Graetz, i. p. 67.

north, behind Phœnicia, its south point reaching Carmel, its north extending to a line with the town of Dan, but its breadth, less than a third of the sweep of beautiful mountain land occupied by Naphtali, the marches of whose territory ran alongside in the centre, and whose limits north and south were nearly the same as those of its neighbour. Naphtali thus held the interior of Upper Galilee, with its lofty heights, from one of which the city of Safed, "the watch-tower," looks down terrace over terrace at an elevation of 2,700 feet above the sea. The mountains, no longer barren and forbidding like those of Judæa, and even richer than those of Samaria—the district of Ephraim—are everywhere rich in springs and flowing brooks and streams, with green slopes, dotted with fruit trees and clumps of other verdure, and glens boasting as rich soil as any in the land.

Such a region could only have been conquered or held by a brave-hearted people, and this character Naphtali always retained. In the blessing of Jacob, the tribe is compared to a towering terebinth, with a goodly crest,[1] and they shewed themselves, at all times, worthy of so proud a symbol. Asher, however, on the other hand, could not, any more than Ephraim, hold his own against the chariots of the Canaanites, and was soon contented to live among them,[2] rejoicing in the possession of some of the richest land in Palestine, which yielded the oil in which he was to "dip his foot," the "bread," which was to be "fat," and "the royal dainties," in which he was to delight.[3] Sinking into purveyors for the rich Phœnician cities which lay at the foot of their mountains, on the shore, across the sea-plain, they

[1] Ewald's *Geschichte*, ii. 380.
[2] Judg. i. 31, 32.
[3] Gen. xlix. 20. Deut. xxxiii. 24.

preferred the gains of trade with Tyre, Sidon, Acre, and their sister communities—which, from their vast commercial and maritime activity, offered a constant and richly profitable market for all the fruits, grain, and produce they could raise—to any nobler aims, and soon lost their lofty valour of Joshua's day, until national spirit had so faded away, that when Zebulon and Naphtali "jeoparded their lives to the death," in the struggle against Sisera, Asher cravenly sought its own interests in the havens and villages of its heathen allies.[1] The district obtained by Zebulon included the north-west part of the rich plain of Esdraelon, and the beautiful sweep of the Lower Galilee hill country, which includes Nazareth and the ancient Jotapata: its northern marches running below those of Asher and Naphtali, and its southern resting on those of the western half tribe of Manasseh, or, in other words, reaching to the northern slopes of Carmel. Living to a large extent among the hills, for its portion of Esdraelon was a small one, it, too, like Naphtali, preserved its manly vigour, and bore itself nobly in the struggle for freedom, against the ancient populations. Issachar, which found its home next it, in the finest position in Palestine, the wide sweep of Esdraelon in its richest portion, was very different in its temper. Then, as now, their dwellings were chiefly on the hills enclosing the plain, for open country was, at all times, exposed to invasion, in antiquity, and Esdraelon was, in all ages, as it is still from the Arabs, liable to be the camping-ground of any enemy entering the land. But the rich red soil, which they tilled far and near, was too profitable to be risked by any display of spirit or independence, especially as the tribe made apparently no effort, even at first, to take the strong Canaanite

[1] Judg. v. 17, 18.

towns on its border—Acre, on the west, Bethshean, on the east, and Taanach and Harosheth, on its southern edge. It "saw that rest was good, and the land pleasant, and he bowed his back to bear, and became a slave to tribute." The blessing of Jacob rightly described him, as "a strong-boned he-ass"—the heavy beast for the field, not that for the pad—"couching down between two hedgerows,"[1] resting in dull quiet and ease. From the first, the tribe fell back from its manhood, and bore only a very subordinate part in the history of the nation.[2]

The remaining tribes sought homes in the south, with more or less mutual help, but without any organized support of the whole people. The small tribe of Benjamin—a client, in some sense, of Ephraim, and only separated from it in sympathies after the final division of the kingdom under Rehoboam—obtained a confined but fruitful district on the south of its great patron tribe; embracing whatever it could conquer of the space between Jerusalem on the south, and Bethel on the north, and from the Jordan to the west side of the central hills. The Gibeonites and their connected towns thus lived in their midst, while, on the south, the Jebusites and Amorites held the strong fortress of Jerusalem. But the bravery and vigour of the tribe were in striking contrast to its numerical weakness. Ephraim, in fact, owed to it much of its military strength. Always ready to maintain its quarrels by its slingers and bowmen, who were famous for their skill and courage,[3] and by its swordsmen, who were noted for equal dexterity in the use of their weapon with either hand, it was pre-eminently a soldier clan.

[1] Gen. xlix. 15, 16. [2] *Geschichte*, vol. i. p. 67.
[3] Gen. xlix. 27. Judg. xx. 15. 1 Chron. xii. 2.

The great tribe of Judah, which was, hereafter, from the time of Isaiah, to be known as "the House of Jacob," in contrast to Ephraim and the northern tribes, which were distinguished as "the House of Joseph,"[1] boasted in Joshua's day more fighting men than Ephraim, and had a higher military reputation, early entered into possession of its portion of the land. The districts assigned to the seven smaller tribes were fixed by lot, after their limits had been determined by three men chosen from each, but the enjoyment of the award was left to the future, when the Canaanites should be dispossessed, which they too often never were. With Judah, however, the case was different. Acting independently, like Ephraim, it at once invaded the territory it had chosen, though it had to struggle apparently through generations for its quiet possession. It seems as if it had felt itself aggrieved at the seizure of the richest part of the country by the descendants of Joseph, and had withdrawn as far as possible from them. The Kenites,[2] who were not only allies, but related in blood, had already settled in the far south, on the edge of the desert, and it appears to have turned to them, to find a home the more easily by their help. Jerusalem, itself, which, though taken by Joshua in his early campaigns, had soon been lost again, fell once more, before its fierce attack, and was burned,[3] but only to be recovered, in a few years, by the Jebusites, while Phinehas, the son of Aaron, was still alive,[4] and it was left in their hands, without further struggle, till the reign of David. But though this central stronghold was lost, Judah still held the land on all sides of it except the north, and appears even to have become friendly with its possessors,

[1] Isa. ii. 5, 6; viii. 17; xiv. 1, etc.
[2] See page 414.
[3] Judg. i. 7, 8.
[4] Judg. xix. 11; xx. 28.

living in it peaceably with them, and under them, Benjaminites also forming part of the population.[1] The limits gained, were soon, however, too strait, and had to be widened by successive wars, in which Simeon lent useful aid.[2]

The first conquest in these tribal wars was the town and district of Bezek, in the Maritime Plain, south of Lydda. The ferocious boast of its "king"—a petty tyrant—that he had overthrown seventy "kings," and after hacking off their thumbs, to prevent their using the lance or the bow, and their great toes, to hinder their power to march, had let them gather their food, like dogs, under his table, throws a strong light on the character of the times, though, indeed, at a much later date the Athenians cut off the thumbs of all the men of Egina who fell into their hands, to prevent their holding the lance again. The sternness which inflicted on such a monster the misery he had caused to so many of his equals, was only just retribution.[3]

The beautiful valley of Hebron, then known as Kiriath Arba—"the town of Arba,"[4] a "Father of the Anakites," a race of exceptional stature—next bore the brunt of an attack, which left both the town and the land round it in the hands of Judah, after fire and sword had done their worst. Hebron had gone back into the power of the Canaanites again, since Joshua had taken it,[5] but Caleb, the only other survivor of the spies of forty-five years before,[6] claimed it, at once on the ground of a promise from Moses, and as a gift from Joshua. He had passed through it, in his dangerous journey, as a spy, when in full manly strength, but he eagerly urged that, old as he was, he was

[1] Josh. xv. 63. Judg. i. 21.
[2] Judg. i. 3.
[3] *Valerius Max.*, IX. ii. 8.
[4] Josh. xv. 13.
[5] Josh. x. 36, 37.
[6] Josh. xiv. 6–15.

still as able to fight as when at his best, and demanded to lead the attacking force.[1] The finest grapes of Palestine grew on the slopes of its valley, and it was specially dear to the Israelite, as the site of the cave of Machpelah, in which lay the bodies of the founders of the race. A remnant of the once dreaded Anakim held it, but nothing could resist the fierceness and determination of Caleb and his men, and the town became, henceforth, the capital of the southern tribes, till the storming of Jebus, in the time of David.

Debir, "the oracle town," called, formerly, Kiriath Sepher, "the book town," and Kiriath Sannah, as already noticed, lying about three miles west of Hebron, next invited conquest, and, to kindle enthusiasm, the hand of a daughter of Caleb was offered as a prize to any brave leader who should take it. Such a hero was presently found, in the person of Othniel, "the Lion of God," a younger brother of Caleb,[2] and Achsah, his niece, forthwith became his bride. But the new conquest lay on the edge of the Negeb, or "waterless country," outside the rich valley of Hebron, and the prospect of such an inheritance did not please the damsel, when Othniel, her husband, led her home to it, doubtless with a great cavalcade of his friends, amidst gladdening music; Caleb himself accompanying the procession, to do the young pair honour. Suddenly alighting from her ass, as if some misfortune had befallen her, she begged her father "to give her a dowry" worthy of the name, "for you have given me a waterless place;" "pray give me the springs of water" yonder "as well"—apparently the springs at Ain Dilbeh and Ain Hejeri, between Hebron and Debir, their position favouring the belief, as

[1] Josh. xv. 14.

[2] Judg. i. 13; iii. 9. 1 Chron. iv. 13. Some, however, think he was Caleb's nephew.

one is much higher up than the other, in keeping with their description as "the upper and the nether springs." Here even at the end of October, after the fierce summer heats, Major Conder found a considerable brook running down the middle of the glen, and branching off through small gardens for four or five miles. Such a supply of water is a phenomenon in Palestine, but is still more extraordinary in the Negeb, where very few springs are found. There are, in all, fourteen springs, in three groups, at El Dilbeh, both upper and lower—higher up the valley and lower down—which bubble forth all the year round, affording water enough, if it were utilized, to make the whole valley fertile.[1]

Debir, as has been noticed, has been identified with the hamlet of Dhaheriyeh, "the village on the ridge," which consists of some poor houses built of stones from ancient buildings, and an old tower. The ground near is rocky, the village looking down from its ridge over the landscape. Cisterns supply water—when dug, who can say? There are also rock-cut tombs and wine-presses, and a threshing floor. Only two trees break the bareness. Caves abound, most of the houses being built in front of one or over it. Pavements and rich walls can still be traced, shewing the line of ancient roads to Gaza, Hebron, and Beersheba. The discovery of cuneiform writing at Tel Amarneh in Egypt shows that cuneiform script was the general writing of Western Asia, in early ages; and, as Debir was the "town of scribes," it is not too much to hope that the mounds near it, if opened, might bring to light documents of imperishable burnt clay, as old as Joshua, or older!

Zephath, against which, no doubt, a bitter hereditary en-

[1] *Pal. Reports*, 1874, p. 55.

mity had been cherished, as connected with the repulse of their fathers in their attack on it soon after leaving Sinai: an unsanctioned outburst of rebellious fierceness, which brought on them exclusion for forty years from Palestine, and the death of a whole generation in the wilderness—was also assailed, and so utterly destroyed that its site received the name of Hormah, or "desolation," which is justified even now by its position being entirely unknown.[1] Sudden rushes from the hills enabled Judah also, for a short time, to get Gaza, Askalon, and Ekron, three of the Philistine towns, into their hands, but they could not keep them: the open ground of the great plain on which they stood enabling the Philistines to sweep it with their iron chariots, against which the Hebrews, who had no horses or chariots, were unable to make a stand.[2] Their descent to the sea-coast was, therefore, speedily followed by their permanent retreat to the central hills, where chariots could not follow them. Here, they had Benjamin and the great tribe of Ephraim on their north, with a small spot held by Dan on the north-west slopes, while on the east they were protected by the wild region bordering the Dead Sea. On the south, the desert of the Wanderings was the limit of the region shared between them and Simeon: a frontier partly guarded by the friendly encampments of Jethro's tribe, the Kenites, and other allied Arabs.[3] Yet, from time to time, great hordes of Amalekites and other Bedouins camped at their pleasure on the pastures of the southern uplands; too often accompanying their inroads by fierce attacks and relentless plunder of outlying villages. They were safe, therefore, and that only in a measure, in the northern half of their territory, and

[1] Judg. i. 17. [2] Judg. i. 18, 19.

[3] Thus Abigail, David's sister, was married to an Ishmaelite. 1 Chron. ii. 17.

were hemmed in from expansion by the terrible cavalry of the sea-coast plain on the west, by the awful "wilderness of Judæa" on the east, and on the south had to content themselves with glowing uplands, on some spots only of which settled communities were possible. They had, in fact, a naturally very poor district, for anything more barren than the hills round Jerusalem cannot well be imagined.

Simeon had at first been stronger than Judah, but soon decayed under the adverse influences of its history. Its lot had fallen in the Negeb or South Country, embracing all the district between the nominally lower end of the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean, as far south as the Wady el Arish, or "River of Egypt." At first, with the help of Judah, it had been able to seize some of the rich towns in the plains, but it soon lost them, and had, henceforth, to live under the protection of its neighbour, with no well-defined territory, and with not even a single town it could call its own. The downs that were its assigned home served for pasturage to wandering camps, but the bulk of the tribe lived in the cities of Judah, though without having any voice in their councils. It kept its distinctness, however, as late as the times of David, but, ultimately, was almost entirely lost in the stronger tribe. But it was by no means only a quiet pastoral tribe even in its best days, for incidental notices shew it much on a footing with an ordinary Arab community, in its fierce love of strife and plunder. Its bounds, as proposed, included the rich lands round Gaza, the ancient sanctuary of Kadesh Barnea, and thence in a waving line to the terrible desert on the south end of the Dead Sea. But it could not maintain any footing on the sea-plain, and its enforced life in its bare uplands made it become to a large extent a mere set of Bedouin encamp-

ments; the only life possible in such a scorched and barren district. Indeed, like Arabs, the Simeonites mainly lived in tents, and even in after times we read of their fierce Bedouin habits. Thus, we are told that in the days of Hezekiah they went to the "entrance of Gerar" (not Gedor), to the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks. And they found fat pasture and good, and the land was wide, and quiet, and peaceable: for they that "dwelt there aforetime were of Ham"—that is, Canaanites; with them, also, they smote the Meunim that were found there, and destroyed them utterly and dwelt in their stead: because there was pasture there for their flocks. "Some, moreover, at another time," we read, "went to Mount Seir and smote the remnant of the Amalekites that escaped (from David's slaughter of that great tribe) and dwelt there, to this day," that is, to the time when the Book of Chronicles was compiled, about the time of the return from Babylon.[1] It is said that they increased greatly, but yet, in no degree, like the growth of Judah, and that, among other places, they held Beersheba and not a few towns and villages in the territory of Judah, on the south. Very probably they may have been the ancestors of the savage Arabs of Petra, of the present day, since they took the place of the Amalekites who had held it previously. The Meunim whom they extirpated seem to have been the people of the town of Maan, near Petra.

The fortunes of Dan were even harder than those of Simeon. Nominally, its territory extended from the west of that of Ephraim and Benjamin, to the sea-coast, thus including the districts of the towns of Lydda, Ekron, Beth-Dagon, and Joppa; but though it overran these at first, it was forced back,[2] ere long, into the hills, where the availa-

[1] 1 Chron. iv. 39–43. [2] Josh. xix. 41. Judg. i. 34, 35. 1 Sam. vii. 15.

ble space was quite inadequate to the wants of a community boasting of 64,000 fighting men. Having no patron tribe such as Simeon or Benjamin enjoyed, in Judah, or Ephraim, it seems to have been forced, for a long time, to lead a camp life, crowded together in a spot known, even in later times, as the "Camp of Dan,"[1] near Kiriath-jearim, "the forest city," some miles west of Jerusalem, on the confines of Benjamin and Judah. Such a state of things, however, was soon intolerable, and, as we shall hereafter have to notice more fully, drove a number of the Danites to emigrate to the north, where detached Canaanite communities offered an easy prey. Six hundred men, therefore, with their wives and children, wandered to the foot of Mount Hermon, and having overcome some Sidonians living there, took their land, which was of extraordinary fertility, and changed the name of the conquered town from Laish to Dan.[2] The incident throws light on the state of Palestine before the Hebrew invasion, shewing Phœnician settlements living quietly and with no thought of danger, among the other populations, intent only on the profits of trade. Independence had no attractions for this strange race, and they had no such thirst for dominion as absorbed other peoples. To submit to any government and pay tribute to it willingly, if only their commerce were left free, was the most natural thing in the world with them. We may hence realize how utterly savage and barbarous to burst upon a peaceful, industrious town, injuring no one, but universally lapped in a dream of security, and "smite them with the edge of the sword, and burn the city with fire"![3] How unworthy a race with any idea of civilization, when the city

[1] Judg. xiii. 25; xviii. 12. [2] Josh. xix. 47. Judg. xviii. 27–29.
[3] Judg. xviii. 27. Mommsen's *Röm. Gesch.*, i. 492.

would have given them ready-built homes, and the people might, at least, have been spared their lives, if only to have been used as slaves, as in the case of the Gibeonites. But ages on ages were to pass before men felt kindly to any who were not in treaty bonds with them, or shewed any pity to prisoners of war. Even as late as at Agincourt the common soldiers were ruthlessly massacred; only those who could pay a ransom—that is, the officers of high rank—being selfishly spared.

The tribe of Levi, having been separated to the offices of religion, was appointed to receive its support from the community at large, and, therefore, had no distinct territory assigned it. It was to receive the tithes of the whole produce of the land, from which, however, it was required to pay a tithe to the priests in acknowledgment of their higher consecration. Forty-eight towns, with a circle of meadow-land round each, for the pasturage of its flocks and herds, were, however, set apart for its residence, all over the country, that its services, required in many ways, might be everywhere available. To appoint these towns, of which three on each side of Jordan were cities of refuge, to which the manslayer might flee, was the last public act of Joshua.

It would seem, from what has been said, that the whole country had at first been invaded, and, in a measure, conquered, but that a reaction soon began, by which the Canaanites speedily recovered themselves, so as to drive out the Israelites, in their turn, from all the lowlands, to the difficult mountain heights and valleys. It must thus have required many years before the tribes were in any measure peaceably in possession even of what they ultimately retained.[1] The Book of Judges, indeed, recalls a slow

[1] Josh. xvii. 15–18. Judg. i. 19, 34.

conquest, like that by which the old English, step by step, drove back the native British, or the French gained fast hold of Algeria. Without cavalry or horses, the Hebrews might overrun the country, but could hold only the parts capable of natural defence, and, hence, Canaanite strongholds shewed themselves permanently, like islands, in every direction, above the flood of the intruding population. Yet Israel tenaciously held its ground in the hills, and, in the end, overpowered the native element still surviving among them, making the whole central district thoroughly its own, though cooped up in it and unable to get a footing on the broad, rich sea-plains, which were the glory of the land.[1] The untrained vigour of its warriors, however, contrasted with the developed military skill and appliances they overcame, only intensified the feeling, that they were indebted for their triumph to a higher than human power, and this sentiment continued vivid, century after century.

"O God" [writes a Psalmist], "we have heard with our ears,
Our forefathers have told us,
What wonders Thou didst in their day;
In the days of old.
How Thou didst drive out and uproot the heathen with Thy hand;
How Thou didst break in pieces the nations and cast them out.
For they [Israel] got not the land with their own sword,
Neither did their own arm save them,
But Thy right hand and Thine arm;
And because the light of Thy countenance was favourable to them."[2]

Gilgal, apparently a circle of great stones, like a smaller Stonehenge, with the Tabernacle either beside or within it, continued the centre of the nation as long as the country was still disturbed; the Levites and the high priest natur-

[1] Deut. xxxii. 13; xxxiii. 29. Ps. xviii. 34. Isa. lviii. 14. Hab. iii. 19.
[2] Ps. xliv. I have adopted one or two modifications from Graetz.

ally fixing their dwellings beside the sanctuary. It thus attained a measure of sacredness which long survived ; popular assemblies being gathered at it, and pilgrimages made to it.[1] But its position was unsuited as a permanent capital, and hence, as soon as the tribes separated to their respective territories, the Tabernacle was removed to the previously insignificant Shiloh, a more central locality, ten miles north of Bethel, in the hills of Ephraim, Joshua's tribe, where it continued for centuries.[2] Thus the religious metropolis was distinct from the political : Shiloh being the one and Shechem the other. It seems strange that Bethel—hallowed by so many memories of the patriarchs—should not have been chosen ; but there are indications of a long struggle for that spot, again and again renewed, which rendered it unsafe for a treasure so sacred as the Ark.[3]

The great war of conquest being ended, Joshua laid aside his office and retired to a well-earned retreat at Timnath-serah, sometimes called Timnath Heres, in the mountains of his own tribe of Ephraim ;[4] exercising henceforth only a moral power, which was readily acknowledged. But his retirement was the beginning of a national decline. The constitution of Israel permitted no king or ruler, except in war, and, in the absence of such a bond of union, the tribes naturally fell back on their own tribal organization ; each independent of the others, and often indifferent to any interests beyond their own : a state of things which made energetic and prompt action at any time difficult. The determination to extend their limits and, at the same time, to act apart, was moreover a fruitful source of danger, nor could the same vigourous national spirit, or the same high religious

[1] Hos. iv. 15 ; ix. 15 ; xii. 11. Amos iv. 4 ; v. 5.
[2] 1 Sam. i. 3. Ps. lxxviii. 60, 68. Jer. vii. 12.
[3] Ewald, vol. ii. p. 393.
[4] Josh. xix. 50. Judg. ii. 9.

tone as hitherto, be maintained, when the commonwealth was broken up into fragments. The closing years of Joshua's life were thus like the waning of the moon, in which darkness grows ever deeper—a darkness reflected in his addresses to the people, urging on them, with intense earnestness, the necessity of honouring the covenant they had made with Jehovah at Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, as their fathers had at Sinai. Shortly before his death, indeed, he felt it necessary to make them solemnly renew it, and raise a stone memorial of their having done so.[1] At last, twenty-five years after crossing the Jordan, he died at his own inheritance, full of years and glory, at the age of 110, and the light of Israel for the time faded away.

It was left to the investigations of our own day to link together the present and the distant past, by the discovery of what has been supposed, by some, to be the tomb of the great successor of Moses. M. Victor Guérin, who believes he has identified it, writes thus:[2] "Two hours and a half north-west of Djufna, the ancient Gophna, are the ruins of Tibneh. They cover the slopes and the crest of a hill which is surrounded on the north and east by a deep ravine. On the south side, the hill sinks, in terraces, to a valley formerly covered, in part, with houses, and marked by a magnificent evergreen oak, which is one of the finest in Palestine. Advancing still south, the last slopes of a hill facing Tibneh are met: their rocky sides revealing several tombs, the remains of an ancient necropolis. On the top of the height is a small Mussulman village, with several ancient cisterns, and a number of finely-cut stones of antique masonry built into the modern houses.

[1] Josh. xxiv. 26.

[2] In a note read by him at the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, 28th Oct., 1864.

"The tombs have been hewn out at different levels on the north slopes of the hill, eight being more noticeable than the rest. One, however, is much the most remarkable. An oblong vestibule cut in the rock is supported by four pillars, two, at the side, half separated from the hill; the others, in the centre, entirely so. They have no capitals, and are ornamented at their tops only by a few simple mouldings. Immediately behind them, the face of the rock, forming the front wall of the tomb, is pierced by no fewer than 288 small openings, in eight rows; some square, some triangular, but mostly half-round. At the right side of this rock partition is the low and narrow door of the tomb, leading into a chamber with fifteen compartments, of which, however, only fourteen have been intended to receive the dead. The place of honour in this pale assembly was evidently reserved for the occupant of a small chamber facing the entry: the other loculi being designed for members of his family."

"A first sight of this tomb forces the conclusion that it was intended for some one very illustrious, whose place of rest was honoured, from time to time, with solemn illuminations by lamps, placed in the multitude of small niches in the vestibule. It is not rare to see a few such in the interior of tombs, but there is no other instance of provision being made for illumination from the outside. No one can be fancied as reckoned worthy of such honour but one who was an object of public veneration, and who could this be—at what is seemingly beyond doubt Timnath-serah—but Joshua?"[1]

"The tomb shows marks of the highest antiquity, for it is similar to those made by the Canaanites for themselves, before the arrival of the Hebrews in their country. The

[1] M. Guérin here goes into details of the identification.

very measures used in its construction seem, on close examination, to be the old Egyptian system, which the Hebrews, as we know, brought with them from the Nile."

In 1870, moreover, additional confirmation of this being really the tomb of Joshua, has been believed to have been obtained by the Abbé Richard. He had just explored the ruins of Gilgal, where Joshua caused the sons of Israel to be circumcised with stone knives, and gathered in a radius of a few kilometres, after so many centuries, a large number of what he regards as small flint knives, scattered over the ground, and sometimes buried in it. But as it is said in our Greek Bible that the Israelites, when they interred Joshua, buried with him the flint knives which they had used for circumcision at Gilgal, the Abbé determined to search whether any such knives still remained in the tomb reputed to be his, at Timneh—or Timnath-serah.[1] Judge of his delight, then, when, on a visit to the tomb, in company with a priest from Jerusalem and the sheik of the village El-Birzeit, he found in it a great number of what he holds to be flint knives, in the soil of the different sepulchral chambers.[2] The correctness of this identification has, however, been disputed. The tombs of Joshua, Caleb, Nun, Phinehas, Eleazar, and Ithamar are referred, by Jew, Samaritan, and Christian alike, to spots round the southern

[1] Two passages in the Septuagint record this. 1st, Josh. xxi. 42: "And they gave him (Joshua) the city which he had asked—Thamnasarach, in Mount Ephraim, and Joshua built the city and lived in it. And Joshua took the knives of circumcision, with which he had circumcised the sons of Israel on the journey in the desert, and laid them up in Thamnasarach." 2d, chap. xxiv. 30: "And they buried him in Thamnasarach in Mount Ephraim, in the north of Mount Galaad (Gaas, in *Judg.* ii. 9). And they placed by him, for a memorial, the stone knives with which he had circumcised the sons of Israel in Gilgal when he led them from Egypt as the Lord commanded. *And they are there to this day.*"

[2] Guérin, *Descrip. de la Palestine; Samarie*, vol. ii. pp. 100-102. See also Major Conder, in *Pal. Fund Reports*, 1878, p. 22. In *Tent Work*, p. 118, however, he questions the identification.

side of Gerizim, the Mount of Blessing. The modern Samaritans identify Timnath Heres with the village of Kefr Heris on the hills south of Gerizim, where there are three square domed buildings, one of which is said to mark Joshua's tomb, another that of Nun. St. Jerome apparently speaks of this place and of its sacred tombs as being still venerated, and the Jews of the Middle Ages and of later times believe Haris—very like Heris—the spot where the great hero of the conquest of Palestine lies buried.[1]

[1] *Picturesque Palestine*, i. 233.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TIME OF THE JUDGES.

Moses had given Israel a body of civil and religious law, but he had left them without anything equivalent to a political constitution. His great aim had been to establish among them the worship of Jehovah as their invisible King and God, so firmly as to preclude the possibility of their falling permanently from it. He had found established a body of customs and laws, sanctioned by immemorial usage in the Hebrew tribes and other branches of the Arab race, who were, like themselves, descendants of Abraham; and had necessarily adopted these, after purifying them from all idolatrous taints and raising them in their details to as high a moral tone as was possible in such an age.[1] But he had silently omitted any reference to any political constitution: his only allusion to a possible national unity being that, if kings were hereafter appointed, they should avoid having great numbers of horses, lest it should promote intercourse with Egypt, from which horses were mostly obtained; that in the same way they should not multiply wives, lest they should be led by them into idolatry; and that they should not amass great treasures of silver and gold.[2] Hence, on the settlement of the tribes in their respective territories, they at once reverted to the rude and primitive simplicity of the Arab life of their ancestors. As in the tents of Abra-

[1] Jer. vii. 22. Matt. v. 38. Mat. xix. 8.

[2] Deut. xvii. 14-20.

ham, the father or elder of each related group of families was their ruler, and his authority passed to his eldest son, through successive generations. This primitive organization of society, which was that also of all the Arab tribes, was virtually the same as that of the clans of the Scotch Highlanders.[1] It had prevailed in the slave huts of Egypt, and survived to the time of Saul. The chiefs of the tribe and of its subordinate sections, in due limitation, commanded, and all its members obeyed. The complicated intricacy of our system of government was unknown, and would have been useless, for the Hebrews had no diplomatic relations with other nations; and neither commerce nor manufactures, while hardly any bond existed even between the different tribes.

There was, hence, no central and supreme power, because there was no national government or administration. Each tribe acted for itself; all its authorities were hereditary; no new laws were made, for those of Moses were final; there were no united national enterprises, for there was no nation, but only a set of more or less important fragments. There were, in fact, strictly speaking, no functionaries to appoint or to pay; no public exchequer; and neither taxes, nor duties, unless the tithe payable to the priests and Levites be regarded as a tax, and not, rather, as a quit rent imposed by God on the tribes, in return for their enjoyment of the land, and ordered by Him to be paid to His representatives, who had no other support.

This simplicity in social organization characterized private life no less than public. As each village was self-complete and independent, except in its shadowy relation to the chief of the tribe, so each family had within itself nearly all it

[1] *Mosäisches Recht*, vol. i. § xlvi. p. 262.

required. Much that seems indispensable to us was as unknown and useless as it is to the Bedouin of to-day. Of our artificial tastes, our refinements of luxury and of the table, the Hebrews knew nothing. There was no working class among them; and only here and there the few crafts needed for their elementary wants. All lived on the produce of the field or flock. The wheat had been grown by the householder himself; the flesh and milk of his sheep or goats, and the fruit of his vine or fig tree, were his constant food. His clothes were spun, woven, and sewed by the women of the household, and they baked his bread and cooked his meals; there were no arts or trades, no shoemakers, bakers, grocers, or butchers; only farmers and shepherds. Commerce was limited to an occasional exchange of the produce of the land, or of the flock, with the busy Phœnicians or with passing caravans, for some rich cloth or jewels, or for arms, or articles of utility. The community was as independent in the wants of life as in government.

Nor were there any special arrangements such as we have, to maintain peace and order. There were neither judges to dispense justice, police to guard the laws, nor court-houses for the trial of offenders. The elders of each petty community decided cases at the gate of the village or town, and the execution of their sentences was carried out by those interested, without the intervention of public officers. In the same way private transactions were settled at the gate, without lawyers and without writing, but before the inhabitants, who served as witnesses.[1]

In only two cases was a higher authority than the heads of families or clans felt to be needed: in difficult legal questions, and in the event of war. For the first of these Moses

[1] Gen. xxiii. 3 ff. Ruth iv. 1 ff. See vol. i. p. 365.

had provided, but nothing had been determined as regarded the other.

If the elders could not settle any special dispute, or if their decision were questioned, recourse was to be had to the priests;[1] the only rule, in the Mosaic legislation, which in any measure bound the whole nation together in their civil relations. But, as has been said, no provision was made in reference to war. There was no standing army, and the endless subdivision of the community into independent fragments made one, in our sense, impossible. Professional soldiers, in fact, did not exist, nor was there any disciplined force whatever. If the country were invaded, each man armed himself as he could, and followed the head of his village, who led his contingent to the rallying place of the clan; perhaps at some point where all the other clans of the same tribe were to meet; but in such hasty gatherings, when those only who chose assembled, there was neither gradation of rank nor any military order. Organized battalions, payment of troops, uniform, commissariat, or strategy were alike unknown. Force or surprise were the only military conceptions. Each man supplied his own food,[2] or got it by plunder, or by a requisition of the band on some town or individual.[3] There was no provision for any lengthened campaign, such as ancient militia undertook in English civil wars or in France, and hence there could be nothing more than mere raids or forays, like those of the Bedouins of to-day; swift marches, ending in an attack or surprise, followed by a dispersion of the force to their respective homes.

In such an utter disintegration of the community—"Home Rule" carried to the sublime—no one, in ordinary times,

[1] Deut. xvii. 8-12. [2] 1 Sam. xvii. 17. [3] Judg. viii. 5. 1 Sam. xxv. 11.

could claim the chief authority, and each individual did "what was right in his own eyes."[1] Patriotism, in a large sense, could scarcely exist, where each village was entirely self-governing, and absorbed the interests of its population. It was only when oppression had become unendurable, that some spirit nobler than the crowd, raising a cry for united action against the enemy, was able to rouse his neighbourhood, or perhaps a large district, to common action, in which he, necessarily, was the leader. Such a hero was forthwith accepted as a "Judge," though he was rather a military leader: the peculiar title rising doubtless from the constant union of supreme judicial authority, in the East, with the highest power. But those only who pleased gathered round him, under the immediate leadership of their own chiefs of villages, clans, and tribes.[2] His power over such volunteers depended, moreover, on their pleasure or on his skill in the management of men. If victorious, he could speak as a master, but before the battle he could do little more than persuade.[3] Even this authority, moreover, passed away with the public danger; for the momentary union of the people at large ceased when no longer necessary, and all, including the liberator himself, returned to their homes and their private affairs. The Judge no longer ruled, because, except in times of war, there were no public interests to protect or advance. Yet he could hardly be said to sink into private life, for his fame commanded respect and guaranteed peace, and he was naturally consulted in cases of difficulty, as one whose wisdom or influence claimed recognition. But he had no defined authority, and was only the first and most honoured citizen of the community.[4]

[1] Deut. xii. 8. [2] Judg. v. 2, 9. [3] Judg. i. 3; viii. 15–17.
[4] Vigouroux, vol. iii. pp. 47, 48.

In the early ages of the Hebrew settlement in Palestine the popular aversion to the authority of any one individual over the nation was universal and profound. So accustomed were they to the Arab tribal or clan and sub-clan organization of their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, that even Joshua, after the conquest and division of the land—notwithstanding the exceptional position he had held as their divinely appointed head—recognized it as only temporary and for a given end, and retired to his inheritance at Timnath-serah, appointing no successor to his dignities, and claiming no rank for his family, but spending his closing years in modest privacy, occupied only with his personal affairs. Henceforth, indeed, we find him claiming no higher authority than to gather the tribes together after the lapse of years,[1] when his end was approaching, to remind them of the benefits with which God had loaded them, and to induce them to renew their covenant with Him. Nor was this dislike to central authority easily overcome even by the experience of ages of trouble, caused by disunion and consequent weakness. When Saul was chosen as king, the hereditary Arab instincts were still so strong, that he himself saw at first no more in his new dignity than that of chief of the army sent against Ammon, and took for granted, when the war was over, that he should return to his plough and his fields.[2] During the first year of his reign, indeed, he was more a "Judge" than a king, for he had not a permanent force, or an administration, or royal revenues, or a capital, and exercised no other functions than to defend the country against its enemies. It was long before he had a rude court, and the nucleus of his army was only slowly formed as the community passed, by imperceptible degrees,

[1] Josh. xxiii. 1; see p. 500. [2] 1 Sam. x. 26; xi. 5.

from the loose and barbarous system of tribal or clan government to that of royalty. Nor do the exceptional cases of Jephthah and Gideon, in one of which power for life was demanded, and in the other offered, form any real contradiction to this characteristic.[1] Public opinion in the days of those heroes was slowly coming round to favour centralization, but still wavered till the days of Saul.

It must not be thought, moreover, that the Judges ruled over all the tribes, at least till the time of Eli and Samuel. Their office was strictly military, for their very name in Hebrew—Shofetim—means "saviours" or "liberators," a title borne in later days by the chief magistrates of the Carthaginians, who were known as Sufetes. None of them, except Othniel, seem to have ruled over Judah and Simeon. Deborah is the heroine and prophetess only of the northern tribes. Gideon is the liberator of the centre of Palestine; Jephthah, of the districts beyond the Jordan; and Samson does not appear to have had authority over even his own tribe of Dan, but appears as Judge only in virtue of his personal exploits.[2]

To such a primitive condition of society, the calamities are, no doubt, to be attributed, which so often led to the rise of dictators, in the person of successive "Judges." The tribes, which were too weak to resist oppression when they acted singly, would have been too strong to be attacked had they been united. But the long retention of their Arab fondness for tribal government was not without its wise purpose in the arrangements of Providence. Their religious development demanded isolation from their neighbours, and was secured, among other means, by their being placed in a

[1] Judg. viii. 22; xi. 9.
[2] Judg. xv. 10–13. Ewald, *Gesch.*, vol. ii. pp. 515, 516.

country secluded from the outer world by the desert, on the south and east; by their forced restriction to the mountain districts far from the Mediterranean, on the west; and by the barrier of the Lebanon range, on the north. They were thus guarded, as far as possible, from intercourse with heathenism, and had only to blame their own supineness for isolated remains of it having been left in their midst, through their failure in carrying out energetically the command of God to sweep it from the land, while the enthusiasm of their first attack was still at its height, and the dread of them paralyzed resistance. But, not contented with even such care, to protect them from corrupting influences, God had specially discountenanced their having a monarchy like that of the nations round;[1] He, Himself, promising to be their Strength and Deliverer, and even proclaiming Himself expressly their King.[2] Nothing could impress on them more vividly this dependence on Him, than their helplessness against their enemies when they forsook Him, and their repeated deliverance by instruments whom He raised up, when they once more penitently sought His aid. It was, moreover, a great safeguard to them, that they escaped the corrupting influence of a strong central power, which, in all probability, would have favoured idolatry, for when they at last adopted monarchy, their kings, as a rule, set the example of apostasy; only three or four, out of more than forty, who reigned over Judah or Israel, remaining true to Jehovah, and the fashion thus set by a court naturally spread through the whole land. The isolation of tribal government, on the other hand, limited religious defection to restricted areas, and made it possible for the people to recover

[1] Exod. xv. 18; xviii. 19. Deut. xxxiii. 3. Judg. viii. 23. 1 Sam. viii. 7 ff.
[2] 1 Sam. x. 19; xii. 12.

themselves from it, again and again, by the healthy influence of neighbouring districts still true to the ancient faith.

The religion of the Canaanites was a terrible snare for a people whose fathers had lived amidst the idolatry of the Nile, and who had since received a spiritual religion in which every idolatrous emblem was forbidden. In the early ages of the world such a lofty conception as the worship of an unseen God was beyond ordinary grasp, and opposed to every mode of thought. There was no idea of life or power apart from matter, whether purer or more gross. Every result above, around, beneath; every expression of power by any natural law, was ascribed to a living source and cause. The wave, the leaf, the wind, the star were more or less alive, as we ourselves are; higher powers than those of man disclosing themselves in each. In Palestine, the idolatry prevailing was that which from the Euphrates had spread over Western Asia. The sun, under different names; the moon, and the planets, were the great gods, presiding over all nature and over human affairs. The sun and moon, associated, in the phenomena of the seasons, with the wonders of reproduction in every form, had become the symbols of a worship in which this was the leading thought. Impurity in the coarsest forms, was the natural result. Sensuality became part of religion, till Sodom and its wickedness came to be the unexaggerated picture of Canaanite worship as a whole. How terribly seductive such a glorification of the passions must have been, in such a climate, we see in the catastrophe of Baal-peor, and how hard it would be to keep a rude people, in the face of such a religion, to the height of a faith so pure and lofty as that of Moses. While we may blame Israel, therefore, for its repeated falls, the blame may well be mingled with pity.

The chief god of the Canaanites was Baal—the sun—who was worshipped under different names. In one part he was Moloch, in another, Chemosh, but his worship was everywhere alike, fierce and cruel. His consort, Ashtaroth, the Babylonian goddess Istar, the goddess of love, worshipped as the morning star Venus,[1] and, perhaps, also, as the moon—the Greeks translating her name Astarte—fostered abominations in her worship, almost inconceivable in our times. Erech was her chief city, and there she had, attached to her temple, choirs of festival-girls, and troops of consecrated maidens, all recognized as harlots, whose pay went to the temple treasury; and crowds of priests—"the festival makers who had devoted their manhood"—that is, emasculated themselves—that men "might adore the goddess," and these, in their rites, "carried swords, and razors, and flint knives," who in the wild frenzy of the sacred rites desired to dedicate themselves to the goddess, by self-mutilation, or to hack themselves as was done by the priests, in Elijah's time, at Carmel. Besides Ashtaroth, moreover, there was Asherah, another form of the worship of sensuality, for, though the word is usually translated "grove" in our version, it was the name of a goddess. The influence of such worship on Israel was very hurtful even in the times of the Judges, though it seems chiefly to have affected those portions of the people who came into contact with the isolated native communities still surviving in the Hebrew territory, or in the districts round it. The bulk of the nation, living quietly in their upland valleys, and shut off from communication with strangers, appear, however, rather to have fallen into religious apathy, and a half idolatry of their own, than to have adopted the idols of their neighbours. The grand success of

[1] As the evening star, "Venus" was the goddess Beltis. K.A.T., 178.

the reformation achieved by Samuel, and such glimpses of Hebrew life as are given in the Book of Ruth, seem to imply that, as a whole, there was always a latent spiritual life in the mass of the people, needing only to be roused and purified. It was not till the later days of the Kings that foreign idolatry gained a strong footing in Israel at large. Through the whole time of the Judges the slumbering sensibility of the multitude was ever ready in times of public excitement to flame up into zeal for Jehovah, in answer to a fitting appeal. So it was under Deborah and Gideon, to mention no others, and so it continued for centuries later.

The want of a leader after Joshua's death, and the breaking up of the tribes into separate communities, naturally checked the career of conquest, for the strength of individual tribes was unequal to the lasting subjugation of the Canaanites in their respective bounds. Gradually, therefore, the sword was sheathed, and friendly relations sought with those whom they had been commissioned to drive out of the land. Nor were the Phœnicians and other Canaanite peoples displeased with a condition of things which left the caravan roads open for the commerce to which they were devoted. The conquerors were, in fact, being gradually conquered in their turn, by too close intimacy with their heathen neighbours. The language of the Hebrews was almost, if not quite, the same as theirs,[1] and there was not a little in some of their modes of thought and expression in religious matters that sounded very like those familiar in Israel. The Moabite stone speaks of Chemosh as "saving" the king "from all his enemies, and giving him his desire

[1] Thus Rahab speaks freely with the spies, and we never hear of any difficulty afterwards. The Hebrews had adopted "the language of Canaan," as long ago as Abraham's day, and had abandoned the use of their native Aramaic. See vol. i. p. 339.

on all them that hated him."[1] He is said "to be angry with Moab," as Jehovah is spoken of as being "angry with Israel,"[2] and national calamities are directly ascribed to this. He is described as commanding King Mesha to "go up against Israel," as Israel is required by Jehovah to "go up against the Canaanites."[3] Baal and Astarte, in their multiplied local titles, would doubtless be regarded as only different presentations of the same God—"the Creator of the Universe." The very names given to children by Israelite and Canaanite mothers were often strangely alike. Both had Eleazar, "God has helped," and Nathanael, "God has given." If Jonathan meant "Jehovah has given," Baal-jothan was its equivalent in the language of the country. The Hebrew name Hanniel, "the favour of God," had its counterpart in Hannibal, "the favour of Baal." With so much in common, especially the use of the same language, it seems less strange that some of the Hebrews should so readily have grafted the heathenism around on the worship of Jehovah, especially as the Levitical system was evidently much in abeyance for the first centuries after the conquest. Altars of Baal, or Ashtoreth, moreover, were numerous on every side—on the hill-tops, and on artificial mounds;[4] in groves on the hill slopes; under green trees elsewhere; in valleys; at the gates and market-places of the towns, and on the flat house-tops;[5] while their temples adorned every considerable place. To minds alive to the lofty purity and spirituality of the Hebrew religion there might, indeed, be no danger of confounding it with the materialism and grossness of Canaanite idolatry. But when we remember how many, even in our own age, think they can reconcile a pantheistic con-

[1] See Ps. liv. 7; lix. 10; xcii. 11. [2] 2 Kings xvii. 18. [3] Judg. i. 2.
[4] 1 Kings xi. 7. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 19. Ewald, vol. iii. p. 418.
[5] Deut. xii. 2. Jer. vii. 31; xi. 13; xxxii. 35.

fusion of God and nature, with a profession of Christianity, it is less to be wondered at that the ignorant and simple of such a remote age—married as many of them were to Canaanite wives devoted to Ashtoreth—should have made a fatal compromise between the worship of Baal, the Sun-god, the "Lord of all," and Jehovah. Their fathers had accepted even so gross a symbol of the true God, as the golden calf.

The craving for quiet to enjoy the rich inheritance on which they had entered, must, also, have tended greatly to lower the tone of feeling in Israel. The long wilderness life gave an unspeakable relish to the comforts of a settled home; especially in a community that had so entirely abandoned the Arab tastes of their fathers in this respect, that, even after forty years in the desert, they were eager to have fixed abodes instead of moving tents. This selfish love of ease, indeed, often left neighbouring tribes unaided in their struggle with native or foreign enemies. Familiar relations were cultivated with their neighbours, and intermarriages became common; Israelites taking Canaanite wives, and giving their daughters to Canaanite husbands.[1] Such mixed marriages doubtless were more frequent in the border districts, to which peace was vital; but what part had not native communities within its own bounds? Asher, Naphtali, Zebulon, and especially Issachar, living as it did on Esdraelon, almost as subjects of the Canaanites, may have been more exposed than some others to this danger; but Ephraim and Manasseh must have had constant intercourse with the Canaanites of the plain of Sharon; and the heathen Jebusites[2] held Jerusalem, in the territory of Benjamin. In

[1] Judg. iii. 6.

[2] Jebusites—Lengerke translates the name=Treaders under foot. Others, "the trodden down," either of a people by war, or of a threshing floor.

Dan, we find Samson taking a Philistine wife ; and in Judah, Absalom's general, Amasa, far later, was the son of an Ishmaelite and a Hebrew woman.[1] David himself, indeed, married the daughter of Talmaï, the chief of Geshur, on the north-east of Bashan ; and these must only have been illustrations of an ordinary rule. But in the tribes beyond the Jordan, with their exceptional preference of Arab tent-life, intermarriages with the daughters of Moab and Ammon were, doubtless, very common ; related as these peoples were to them in blood. Levi appears to have kept itself purest, but even in it, Moses, himself, had set the example by marrying a Cushite wife, and it may be taken for granted that each of the tribes had among them numerous children of the foreign multitude who had come with their fathers from Egypt.

From intermarriage with the heathen to taking part in their idolatrous worship was only a step. The Canaanites had already holy places for sacrifice or pilgrimage, to which were attached legends powerful in their influence over ignorant minds. Some of the hills and valleys on the bounds of Israel had long been held sacred. Mount Carmel had for ages been the seat of one oracle,[2] and Mount Tabor boasted another.[3] At the foot of Hermon was the famous temple of Baal Gad—the god of good fortune. The names of Babylonian deities are found, indeed, in Palestine and the adjoining Semitic lands. Nebo, the Babylonian god of prophecy and literature, gave his name to towns in the territory of Reuben and Judah, as well as to the Moabite mountain, on which Moses breathed his last. Anu, the Babylonian god of heaven, and his female consort Anatu, reappear in Beth

[1] 2 Sam. xvii. 25. 1 Chron. ii. 17.
[2] Movers, vol. i. pp. 26, 671.
[3] Raumer, *Palästina*, p. 45.

Anati—"the Temple of Anatu"—and in Anathoth, the birthplace of Jeremiah, while Sinai itself is only "the Mountain of Sin"—the Moon-god. Bethel, in Benjamin, was an ancient sanctuary and a place of pilgrimage.[1] Possibly the aliens who had come up with Israel from Egypt may have favoured these places first; but, if so, they soon found many to follow them. Hence Jehovah-worship was merged, at least here and there, in the prevailing idolatry. "They served the idols (of the Canaanites). Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters to Shedim (ox-gods),[2] and shed innocent blood, even the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was polluted with blood."[3]

The Sanctuary at Shiloh, where priests and Levites ministered, was remote from many of the tribes, and lay, besides, in the territory of Ephraim; a people disliked for their pride and selfishness. In the general anarchy of tribal division and patriarchal rule, private altars were erected by individuals. The Levites, who should have settled as the public teachers of religion in their own cities, were inadequately provided for, and had to wander whither they could for a living. The story of Micah illustrates the age in this and other particulars. His house stood on one of the green hills of Ephraim, and he has dedicated to Jehovah 1,100 shekels of silver, which he had stolen for the purpose, from his mother.[4] Both, however, agreed to their appropriation to religious uses, such as their ideas dictated. The house be-

[1] Graetz, vol. i. p. 101.

[2] Gesenius, *Lex.*, 8th edition. Baal is called the "heifer Baal" in Tobit i. 5.

[3] Ps. cvi. 36–38.

[4] Köhler thinks that the images were made with 200 shekels of the stolen money, devoted to Jehovah on her son restoring the 1,100, and confessing his theft. *Lehrbuch*, vol. ii. p. 56.

comes almost a castle,[1] and a chamber in it, called "a House of God," is set apart as a temple, in which are set up two silver images, one sculptured and one molten, clothed in a mask and the priestly mantle called an ephod, to resemble as nearly as possible the Oracle at Shiloh.[2] No Levite being available, a son of the house is installed as priest, and this strange medley of heathenism and Jehovah-worship forthwith goes on with all sincerity. A wandering Levite, however, who proves to be a grandson of Moses,[3] comes to Micah's house, from Bethlehem Judah, in search of employment, and is appointed priest for the poor reward of ten silver shekels a year and a suit of clothes.

But, ere long, the tribe of Dan, feeling themselves cramped up in too narrow bounds, as already noticed, send off five men in search of new settlements, and these, as they approach Micah's house, are arrested by the sound of a well-known voice, which proves to be that of the Levite. Asking him, "Who brought him hither? and how much he made in this place? and what he had to do here?" he tells them his strange story, and how Micah feels sure that Jehovah will now do him good when he has a Levite for priest. They learn also about the sacred images he has in his care, and presently pass on.

[1] The word for "gate," Judg. xviii. 16, is never used of that of a house—always of that of the enclosing wall of a town or fortress.

[2] Stanley's *Jewish Church*, vol. i. p. 295. Of the two images, one, apparently as large as a man, was called *Teraphim* (the plural *Teraphim* is translated "an image" in 1 Sam. xix. 3, 16; the singular is never used in Scripture), from its mask, and *Ephod*, from its mantle. Such images were used as Oracles (Zech. x. 2), and as appurtenances of public worship (Hos. iii. 4); but the custom was finally put down by Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 24). See Ewald's *Alterthümer*, pp. 256-8.

[3] Judg. xviii. 30. The name Moses has been changed by the Rabbis to Manasseh, to hide the fact that a grandson of their great legislator had fallen so low. In the Hebrew text the word translated Manasseh is written MNSH. Without the N inserted above by the Rabbis it reads Moses. The Vulgate has Moses. The Septuagint. Manasses—thanks to its authors being Jews.

Returning the same way, however, some time after, as the guides of six hundred of their clansmen towards the north, they bring them to Micah's house. They, too, would like to have the Levite as their priest, and the precious images would be of priceless value, as a protection in their new homes. They determine, therefore, to rob Micah of his treasures, and to induce the Levite to join their fortunes. His house was at Micah's gateway, and there the six hundred gather, talking with their old neighbour, while the five men steal into Micah's sacred chamber, and having brought out both the images and the teraphim and ephod, are far off with them, in company with the Levite and their six hundred brethren, before the loss is discovered. Their new ecclesiastic had indeed some faint scruples about going with them, but these quickly yielded before a promise that he should be priest, not of a single house, but to a whole tribe and family in Israel.[1]

Thus, in the years following Joshua's death, the ministers of religion were both poor and strangely scattered over the land; no general system of public worship had been set up, and the gravest corruptions had already taken root. It is not, therefore, surprising that the hill-tops were soon marked by altars, alongside which the sharp-pointed stone symbols of Baal were raised. Some in the northern tribes worshipped the Phœnician or Syrian Baal and Astarte; and many beyond the Jordan gave themselves up to honour Chemosh and Moloch, the gods of Moab and Ammon. In the more southern parts, bordering on the Maritime Plain, Dagon, the god of the Philistines, had many adherents; and, everywhere, house gods, under the old name of teraphim, were consulted as oracles, as in the case of Micah's

[1] Judg. xviii. 14–19.

Levite. Jehovah was still acknowledged, but He, also, was represented by an image. A wild confusion of ideas, in fact, prevailed, in keeping with an age when everything was unsettled, and lawlessness in common life reacted in every direction. Old modes of thought, still surviving from the days of Egypt, or revived by contact with the idolatry around, mixed themselves up with the new and lofty conceptions learned from Moses—their incompatibility not having yet been realized. So heathen in their feelings, indeed, did many become, as often, like the Canaanites, to name their children after the idols. Thus, a son of Saul[1] was known as Ishbaal—"the man of Baal;" while two of his sons and one of his grandsons have names ending in Bosheth —"shame," a word used by the Jews as a contemptuous substitute for Ashtoreth.[2]

In these wild times, however, the recollection of the wonderful story of the Exodus, Sinai, and the wilderness, still lingered in many minds, and kept them true to Jehovah. Indeed, if the inscription on the famous Samaritan Pentateuch, not the only similar one existing, be genuine, some faithful souls still honoured the "Law" by diligently transcribing it for wider use. On the back of that ancient MS. one reads with awe the words: "I, Abishuah, son of Phinehas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, the favour of Jehovah be on them—for His glory I have written this holy Torah (copy of the Law), in the entrance of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, on Mount Gerizim, even Bethel, in the thirteenth year of the possession by the children of Israel of the land of Canaan and all its boundaries. I thank the

[1] 1 Chron. ix. 39. Jerubbaal, the name taken by Gideon, means, like Meribbaal, the son of Jonathan (1 Chron. ix. 40), "a contender against Baal."

[2] Kalisch.

Lord."[1] Another Samaritan MS., has, at the end of Genesis, the following note, which is equally startling: "This holy Torah has been made by a wise, valiant, and great son, a good, a beloved, and an understanding leader, a master of all knowledge, by Shelomo, son of Saba, a valiant man, leader of the congregation by his knowledge and his understanding; and he was a righteous man, an interpreter of the Torah, a father of blessings—of the sons of Nun—may the Lord be merciful to them!—and it was appointed to be dedicated holy to the Lord, that they might read therein with fear and prayer in the House of the High priesthood—in the seventh month, the tenth day; and this was done before me, and I am Ithamar, son of Aaron, son of Ithamar the High Priest: may the Lord renew his strength! Amen."[2] Nor could there have been wanting those who recalled to the multitude the glorious past, and reproved the degradation into which some of their brethren had fallen. Among the Levites who guarded the Tabernacle and the Ark at Shiloh, some, no doubt, lifted their voices against the evil around them. Such a "messenger of God"[3] we find living at Gilgal, and making his appearance at an assembly of the people at Bethel, reproaching them for having forsaken their covenant with Jehovah, and for having made one with idols; and tracing to this unfaithfulness all the calamities they were suffering at the hands of the Canaanites.[4] Nor was it without significance that enough

[1] *Tent Work*, p. 26. The Rev. M. Löwy recently made this entry the subject of a paper read before the Society of Biblical Archæology.

[2] *Tent Work*, p. 27.

[3] The *Speaker's Comm.* reads, "The Angel of Jehovah," but Bertheau and De Wette translate it as above; so do Zunz, Ewald, and Paulus Cassel. That the inhabitants of Canaan were not to be driven out before them, because of their sins, is the ground of their sorrow.

[4] Judg. ii. 1 ff.

sensibility still remained in those who heard him, to melt them to tears at such words. But, unhappily, their sorrow was only passing.

In Shiloh itself, the religious centre of the tribes, there seems to have been no more provision for the moral instruction of the nation, than amongst the scattered Levites. Sacrifices were offered to Jehovah as, in the Canaanite towns, to Baal or Astarte; but we have no indications that the priests' lips kept knowledge, or that they sought teaching at His mouth.[1] The Ark, with its priceless treasure of the two Tables, was regarded rather as a defence against the enemy in the field, than as a source of instruction. After the harvest, at the time of the gathering of the grapes, the people were wont, in larger or smaller numbers, to assemble at the Tabernacle with their wives and children,[2] at a yearly feast or Haj. The fathers brought an offering: after presenting part of which on the altar, the priest got his portion, and the rest served for a feast in the family circle. Dances followed among the vineyards round, but there is no trace of any loftier religious service.

This gloomy time lasted through generations: for, from the death of Joshua to the election of Saul, was a period of over 400 years.[3] With warlike neighbours round them, eager to reconquer so fair a land, it could not fail to bring frequent peril and even disaster. Again and again, whole districts were attacked, spoiled, and even reduced to helpless submission—their brethren quietly looking on, intent only on their own interests. But such trouble ultimately served its end as a wholesome discipline, recalling the sufferers to their ancient faith, which thus, in the end, became fixed in

[1] Mal. ii. 7. [2] Judg. xxi. 19. 1 Sam. i. 3.

[3] The exact time is fixed variously by different authorities—some thinking it 480 years, others 420, and so on, but all agree that it was over 400 years long.

the national heart. When the need was greatest, men always moreover rose, in the providence of God, who, by heroic devotion, delivered the section of their brethren oppressed for the time, and indicated God's faithfulness to the race. These were the Judges or "Saviours" of Israel.

CHAPTER XV.

THE JUDGES.

THE religious enthusiasm in Israel, kindled by Moses during the wilderness life, and intensified by the incidents of the conquest, survived, in a measure, during the remaining years of Joshua, and even of the elders who survived him, and "had known all the works of Jehovah that He had done for the nation," through its second great leader. Gradually, however, as the generation passed away that had seen the great deeds of these first days, and the miraculous help God had vouchsafed Israel, lower influences came into play, and the high tone of the past was forgotten. Eleazar the high priest, the son and successor of Aaron, had died about the same time as Joshua,[1] and was buried, as it would seem, about four miles outside the valley of Shechem, on the spur of one of the hills of Ephraim, known as the hill of Phinehas; the name of the illustrious son having taken the place of that of his father. In the entrance of Eleazar to the Holy Land we have, in addition to Joshua and Caleb, a third person of the generation of the Exodus who crossed the Jordan. Perhaps he was spared as the high priest; or are the words respecting that generation dying in the wilderness to be taken in a general, not a literal sense?

Conder identifies the hill of Phinehas as the spot on which the present village Awertah stands, in the plain outside the

[1] Josephus, *Ant.*, V. i. 29.

valley of Shechem, on the east side of the chain of hills of which Ebal and Gerizim are a part. The tomb of Eleazar is "a rude structure of masonry in a court open to the air." It is eighteen feet long, plastered all over, and shaded by a splendid terebinth. That of Phinehas, his son, which is near, is apparently an older building, and the walls of its court have an arcade of round arches, now supporting a trellis, covered with a grape-vine, and the floor is paved.[1]

This famous high priest, consecrated as the second from Aaron, according to the Rabbis the son of a Midianite mother,[2] became, in a measure, the successor of Joshua. Full of fiery zeal, and sternly uncompromising in his devotion to Jehovah, he had already in his youth signalized himself by the act which put a close to the licentious outburst at Baal-peor, and stopped the plague then destroying the camp. Henceforward, he became a noted and foremost man in Israel, especially as the heir to the high priesthood, and from the special commendation vouchsafed him by Jehovah. As much soldier as priest, it was he who led the avenging host against Midian, taking with him the sacred Ark.[3] Though in a nominally inferior position till his father's death, it is nevertheless he, rather than Eleazar, who seems to have been the moving spirit in the maintenance of the old religious fervour and strictness during the ever darkening times. Thus we see him the commander of the Levite guard of the Tabernacle and camp, and, when the Benjamites had committed an act of atrocious immorality, it was he who gave the command to prosecute the war against them which ended in their being almost exterminated.[4] At an earlier time, when the Reubenites had built a huge altar

[1] *Tent Work*, p. 41.
[2] Wagenseil's *Sota*, vol. viii. p. 6.
[3] Num. xxxi. 6.
[4] Judg. xx. 28.

on some height on the western edge of the Jordan,[1] it was Phinehas who headed the deputation to remonstrate with them, and only their earnest deprecation of any design to forsake Jehovah kept him from making it the occasion of the first great civil war.[2] "So great was his courage," says Josephus, "and so remarkable his bodily strength, that he would never relinquish any undertaking, however difficult or dangerous, without gaining a complete victory." It had been divinely promised that the high priesthood should continue in his family, and this was literally fulfilled. It was interrupted, indeed, when Eli, of the race of Ithamar, was priest, but the line of Phinehas resumed the dignity in the person of Zadok, Solomon's high priest, and continued to hold it till the fall of Jerusalem.[3] It has been thought that his name—Phinehas—was an Egyptian word, thus making it the last trace of the sojourn of Israel in the Nile Valley, but this seems a mere fancy, since the derivation from a Hebrew root is much more satisfactory, especially in its meaning, which, from this source, would be "Oracle Mouth," or "Mouth of Brass," as Chrysostom means "golden mouth," yet it is not without interest to learn that the name of the mother of Phinehas, Putiel, is formed of the Egyptian word Puti or Poti, devoted to, and the Hebrew word El, God.[4]

After a time, however, Phinehas died, and with him the age of stern fidelity to the national covenant with Jehovah seems to have come to a close. Weary with years of struggle; satisfied with what they had acquired; tempted to seek friendship with the Canaanites by the similarity of language, the opportunities of profit, the seductions of neighbourhood,

[1] Josh. xxii. 10.
[2] Josh. xxii. 10–34.
[3] 1 Chron. xvi. 39–40.
[4] De Vogüe's *Inscriptions Sémetiques*, p. 125.

by their own want of military science, and by the weakness of tribal division ; their warlike feelings gave way to a desire for ease and quiet.

It was, indeed, humanly speaking, only what might have been expected. The Phœnicians and other Canaanites could, doubtless, have been overwhelmed, had the tribes remained united under a competent leader, and had the burning enthusiasm of the first attack been utilized to carry out the war to the uttermost. But the resignation of his high office, as Dictator, by Joshua, and the dispersion of the tribes to their respective territories, let the golden opportunity pass, never to return. The rush of invasion had already spent its force, and now the rods which could not even be bent when united, were easily broken in detail when apart.[1] The strength of the Phœnicians was, in fact, out of proportion to that of Israel. In Joshua's days they still paid tribute to Egypt as they had done for 400 years before, enjoying in return a monopoly of the Egyptian trade, which they had developed with great energy. Their progress in the Ægean Sea had been arrested by the growing power of the Greeks and other races, but they still retained various islands, as the outposts of their foreign commerce. They had already reached Sicily, Malta, and the distant northern coast of Africa, and had everywhere planted trading factories, like those of the European nations in modern times in India ; and these colonies may very probably have been strengthened by an extensive emigration from Palestine, to escape the terror of Joshua's sword.[2] But even these far-

[1] God had from the first said that He would drive out the native populations by "little and little," and not "in one year," "lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against" Israel. Exod. xxiii. 30.

[2] See page 462. Maspero believes that the monumental inscription, recording the flight of Canaanites to Africa, was genuine. *Histoire Ancienne*, p. 292.

scattered settlements did not mark the limits of their commercial enterprises, for this was the time when, as Humboldt says, their flag waved at once in Britain and in the Indian Ocean.[1]

The vast wealth of Sidon and the other native towns must have been eagerly coveted by the Israelites, but it was beyond their reach. They could not stand up against the disciplined, variously armed battalions of the lowlands, in their coats of mail, and dreaded their terrible iron chariots. Giving up the hope, therefore, ere long, of mastering the broad and rich sea-coast plains, they kept to the hills; but, as the passes by which commerce flowed to Egypt, Arabia, Babylon, and Assyria, ran through these, the Phœnicians were more than willing to live quietly with those who commanded them. Hence the Israelites were allowed to settle in their towns;[2] very likely with some conditions of dependence, though still living apart, and adhering, in the main, to their own laws and customs. The inland Canaanite populations, moreover, which survived Joshua's terrible onset, soon recovered from their depression, and became in turn the assailants. Their troubles had, in fact, regenerated the remnant of the nation, and kindled a desperate resolution, before which the Hebrews, very soon, quailed. Even the usually unwarlike Sidonians indeed, after a time became more or less their masters, selling them abroad as slaves when in debt, and treating them at home as serfs,[3] till "the soul of the Lord was grieved for their misery."

The first cry of distress, however, rose not through the fresh vigour of the Canaanites, but was extorted by an invader from the far banks of the Euphrates. The decay

[1] Wilkins, *Phœnicia*, p. 45.
[2] Judg. i. 27–36.
[3] Judg. x. 16. See also Mövers, *Die Phönizier*, vol. ii. pp. 302–315.

of national life and religion had gradually become extreme. Living contentedly among the remnants of the heathen races, the Hebrews freely intermarried with them, and, as the result, too often worshipped Baal and Ashtoreth as well as Jehovah. But it is for ever true that the character of a nation's religion is an index to its national health and vigour, and little of either could survive the moral degeneracy into which they had fallen. Under these circumstances, a king of Aram Naharaim—Syria of the two rivers—or Mesopotamia, Cushan Rishathaim, as yet not recognized in the clay documents which speak of these regions, made his appearance within a very few years after the death of Joshua, and compelled some of the tribes to pay him tribute for eight years. At last, however, trouble had its fitting result, in leading the sufferers back to the God of their fathers, who had done such great things for them while they honoured His covenant; and the religious revival soon brought deliverance. Othniel, "the lion of God," a Kennizite—that is, a descendant from Kenaz, a "duke" of Edom,[1] the younger brother or nephew of the heroic Caleb, and the hero of the taking of Debir, leaving his quiet life with his wife, Caleb's daughter, at the higher and lower springs, south of Hebron, in the scorched uplands, headed a general rising, which drove the oppressor from the district he held, and secured quiet for forty years, till Othniel's death. He is the only Judge mentioned as connected with the tribe of Judah.

A curious and interesting illustration of the increasing light thrown on the Scripture history by the progress of oriental studies, is afforded in connection with Othniel's relations to so distant a land as Mesopotamia. Among the

[1] Gen. xxxvi. 15, 42. 1 Chron. i. 53. Josh. xiv. 14.

cuneiform tablets from Tel Amarna, preserved at Berlin, is one sent by the Egyptian governor of Jerusalem, to his master on the Nile, in which is an oracle of "the mighty king" Marra, a form of the god Baal—whose temple stood in those days on Mount Moriah, "the mountain of Jerusalem," where he was worshipped as identical with the Babylonian god Uras, "the Eastern Sun." The governor's despatch tells his lord that the oracle of their god had declared, that "As long as a ship crosses the sea—this (is) the oracle of the mighty king (the god Marru)—the conquests shall continue of Nahrima and the Kassi." Now the Kassi are the Babylonians, while Nahrima represents the Aram-Naharaim of the Bible, of which Chushan-rishathaim was king. Manetho, the Egyptian historian, tells us that when the Hyksos, or Shepherd Kings, were expelled from Egypt, they built Jerusalem as a protection against the Assyrians, but this statement has hitherto been regarded as of no authority. It appears, however, in a very different light, when we learn that the conquests of the Babylonians—called "Assyrians" in the period when Manetho wrote—were a subject of political consideration in Jerusalem, hardly a century later than the epoch of the expulsion of the Hyksos. There is no longer any reason for doubting that Jerusalem was fortified by the Hyksos princes, or that the Babylonians were already formidable to the inhabitants of Palestine.

"Nahrima" is the Aram-Naharaim of the Old Testament, the Mitanni of the Assyrian inscriptions, the capital of which lay on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, opposite the Hittite fortress of Carchemish, and we thus learn from a document older than the time of Joshua, that it had spread its conquests so widely, long before the age of Othniel, that its advance was dreaded by the Egyptian governor of

Jerusalem. It was, in fact, the terror of Western Asia. But, till this curious document was discovered, the words of Judges respecting the oppression of Judæa, by the king of Mesopotamia, were supported by no external evidence. There was nothing beyond them to shew that that region was even a separate kingdom, much less that its armies had ever marched as far south and west as Palestine: now, however, the voice of the tablets confirms, after a silence of more than three thousand years, even so small a detail of the Scripture narrative.

The next of the isolated notices of these times brings before us a new enemy. The king of Moab—Eglon, "the bullock," perhaps a name of contempt given him by Israel—uniting his bands with those of a related people, the Ammonites, and with the Amalekites, the old enemies of Israel, was able to overpower Benjamin, doubtless after a bitter struggle, and take the town of Jericho,[1] which was in the tribe, and had apparently been rebuilt in some measure, perhaps on another site.[2] Eighteen years of tribute and oppression followed, but a deliverer at last rose, in the person of Ehud, a Benjamite, a young man,[3] but already held in high estimation by his people, and, apparently, a prophet.[4] Chosen to superintend the payment at Jericho of the tribute of his brethren, he prepared himself for a far different errand by binding a dagger, sixteen inches long,[5] on his right thigh, under the mantle or abba, which his position entitled him to wear. The tribute, which was doubtless in kind, having been delivered to the king in person, and an opportunity

[1] Graetz thinks it was Zoar, but most understand it as Jericho.

[2] Jud. iii. 13. Conder says the site of the later city was not the same as that of the earlier, owing, no doubt, to Joshua's curse.

[3] Septuagint. [4] Judg. iii. 20.

[5] The text (Judg. iii. 16) says, "a cubit," and this Major Conder seems to prove demonstratively to have been sixteen inches. *Tent Work*, p. 187.

thus afforded of noticing details of his house, its approaches, and its internal arrangements, he left, and dismissed the tribute-bearers to their homes. But, instead of climbing the mountain pass with them, he went off to the graven images,[1] which already had been set up at Gilgal, and having thus let sufficient time elapse, returned alone to Eglon, announcing that he had a secret message for him. Falling into the snare, the king forthwith ordered silence; an intimation that all should withdraw. He was at the time in his summer apartment, raised on the roof for coolness, and eagerly listened for Ehud's communication. But the wily Benjamite wished to be sure of his prey, and now further hinted that his message was from God. At this intimation, Eglon rose, perhaps from reverence, perhaps to defend himself, in alarm at the mention of a message from the God of the Hebrews, which could be hostile only to him. In an instant, while he thus exposed himself to the blow, Ehud, a left-handed man, like many of his tribe, snatched the dagger from under his cloak, and buried it to the hilt in Eglon's body. Passing instantly through the anteroom,[2] and into the porch, he locked the doors, and quietly left, without exciting suspicion. Nor was it until some time after that the king's fate was known; his servants refraining from forcing the doors lest he might wish privacy. Meanwhile, Ehud had escaped beyond the images at Gilgal, to the woody slopes of Seirath,[3] in the south part of the hill country of Ephraim, bordering on Benjamin, and there, from spot to spot, blew with his trumpet—perhaps a long horn—the well-

[1] The word translated "quarries," Judg. iii. 19, 26, is Pesillim, which is rendered in the other forty-nine places in which it is used, "graven" or "carved images," and only in this incident "quarries." The special rendering here adopted is that of the Targum.

[2] This is the true meaning of the last clause of Judg. iii. 23.

[3] Seirath means "overgrown with bushes or woods."

known war summons, gathering a multitude behind him, armed more or less efficiently on the moment. With these he forthwith rushed down the passes to the fords of the Jordan, to prevent the escape of the enemy to Moab. Ten thousand men, all reputable, and all men of valour, fell before this bold stroke, and Moab was driven from the land, which thenceforward enjoyed a rest of eighty years, at least in this part. But the memory of these dark days remained long after, in the name of the Benjamite village Chepharha-ammonai, "the hamlet of the Ammonites,"[1] and perhaps in that of Michmash, which some think derived from Chemosh, the Moabite god.

The invasion under Eglon had been on the south-east, but the next recorded was from the opposite side of Palestine, where the Philistines, on the Maritime Plain, had already begun those raids into the Hebrew uplands, which were afterwards to become so terrible. To resist them, one Shamgar, otherwise unknown, appeared at the head of a rising, perhaps in Dan and Benjamin, in which he drove back, and ultimately cut off and slew, a foraging party of six hundred men, who had come up from the plains to rob and plunder. This could not, however, have been the first of such inroads, for the Israelites had already been so thoroughly disarmed, that Shamgar's only weapon was the long and heavy iron-shod ox-goad still in use in Palestine; which, however, was formidable in the hands of a strong man. At Lake Huleh I examined one which was being carried by a passing villager. On one end there was a small spud, to clear the coulter from earth, when ploughing; at the other a sharp iron point stuck out, with short iron chains looped from it to the shaft: the prick to urge on the cattle, the

[1] Josh. xviii. 24.

chains to startle them into activity by the noise of rattling. Frequently these goads are very large, some measuring about eight feet long, and being not less than six inches round at the thicker end. Shamgar's weapon, however, may have been the iron coulter of the country plough, a terrible weapon in vigorous hands, but not to be confounded with the huge coulters in use amongst ourselves, for I have seen a man carrying a plough, with great ease, on each shoulder, coulter and woodwork in each case included.[1] But an isolated effort like this was inadequate to secure the freedom of the district, for we find the country at large still harried and oppressed until after Deborah's victory.[2]

It is difficult to put together or make a connected narrative of the incidents briefly recorded in the Book of Judges. Hence, the quiet mentioned as following the deliverance of Benjamin and Southern Ephraim from Moab may refer to those parts only, rather than to the country at large, especially as the notice of Shamgar immediately follows. In any case, however, a long interval of peace gave breathing time to the tribes as a whole, and tended in many ways to their advancement. The chief men rode in state on white asses;[3] the rich sat on finely wrought carpets. Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh had vast flocks on the east of the Jordan.[4] Dan mingled with the Philistines of Joppa, and busied itself with their sea-faring pursuits. Asher, in the north, spread in the same way to the busy sea-shore, as fishermen and traders among the Phœnicians, for they had no other benefit from Phœnician territory, though it had been assigned them,

[1] *Maundrell's Journey*, p. 149 (date April 15, 1696). The Septuagint has "plough-share" for "ox-goad." Judg. iii. 31.

[2] Judg. v. 7.

[3] Judg. v. 10. "Sit in judgment."

[4] Judg. v. 16.

yet this shore they nominally owned from the Bay of Acre to Tyre.[1] There was rich plunder of coloured robes, and embroidered needlework[2] to be torn from the necks of the daughters of Israel, or secured in the sack of her towns, when the enemy came into the land. Commerce, moreover, had increased, so that the caravan routes in the valleys or plains were much in use,[3] and thus the tribes were growing richer and stronger each year.

But the religious revival which had roused Benjamin against Moab, like others before it, gradually died away, and the northern tribes, especially, had turned again, more or less, to the worship of Baal, until at last, about a hundred and sixty years after Joshua's death,[4] the stern lessons of foreign oppression and tyranny once more brought about a reaction in favour of their ancestral faith and roused them to a struggle for freedom. The petty kingdom of Hazor, among the hills of Upper Galilee, overlooking Lake Merom, had long recovered itself from its overthrow by Joshua, nearly a century and a half before, and a successor to the Jabin of that day, bearing the same name, reigned over the district. Strengthening himself by a force of chariots, which he gradually increased to nine hundred,[5] he was able to overpower the Israelites of the north, and to keep them

[1] Judg. v. 17 (Graetz), "abode in his breaches" = at his creeks.

[2] Judg. v. 30.

[3] Judg. v. 6.

[4] Köhler's *Lehrbuch*, vol. ii. p. 48.

[5] Rameses II., in the poem of Pentaur, asserts that the Hittites, in a battle at Esdraelon, had 2,500 chariots of war, at the time of the Oppression of Israel in Egypt; and the Egyptian monuments record that Rameses III. captured in the same plain 994 Canaanite chariots. Thothmes III., long before, after his victory on this field also, took no fewer than 2,041 horses, and 924 chariots. Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne*, p. 204. Chabas, *Études*, p. 434. Cavalry, in our sense, was not used (*Ibid.*, p. 437). Ashtoreth was the patroness of war chariots. Naville, *Mythe d'Horus*, p. 13. Some Canaanite chariots, on the Egyptian monuments, are drawn by oxen, but I have seen oxen trained to run very fast; the chariots taken by Joshua, however, were drawn by horses (Josh. xi. 6). The Canaanite chariots had not scythes or knives at their sides, as has been supposed. See p. 433.

in painful subjection for twenty years. Strong fortresses held by him or his allies (at Taanach, Megiddo, and Beth-shean, on the south of Esdraelon,) effectually cut off help from the southern tribes, and reduced those in the north to great distress. All trade or even movement over the country ceased; the people hid themselves in the upland valleys, or behind the strong walls of their towns; the elders of the villages and of the tribes were alike dispirited and helpless, and no one ventured to attempt resistance.[1] Men were glad to hurry on their necessary errands by secret mountain paths, and the open roads were deserted.[2] The population were, in fact, cowed and paralyzed; for, against the overwhelming force of the Canaanites they could, at best, present only an almost unarmed multitude, among whom an ox-goad was the welcome substitute for a sword, and who could hardly boast of a spear or shield among 40,000 men.[3]

In this emergency it was to a woman—when all men were afraid—that deliverance was due. An early Joan of Arc, fired, like her distant successor, with a grand patriotism and a lofty religious enthusiasm, had pondered the miseries of her brethren, till her heroic soul kindled into a flaming zeal for the overthrow of their oppressor, mingled with indignation at the cowardice of her people, who dared not strike for liberty. It was no case of narrow tribal loyalty, for she lived in the south among the pleasant hills of Ephraim, between Ramah and Bethel, in the centre of the land; a position to which, perhaps, she owed her knowledge of the evil plight of the northern tribes.[4]

[1] Judg. v. 7. "The inhabitants," etc., should be "the rulers."

[2] Judg. v. 6.

[3] Judg. v. 8.

[4] Ewald supposes she belonged to Issachar; Hitzig that she belonged to Naphtali; but Köhler, with justice, rejects these ideas as arbitrary, and thinks she belonged to Benjamin or Ephraim.

Deborah, "the Bee," with all her enthusiasm, was no ascetic, but, in keeping with the aversion of her race to a single life, was the wife of one Lapidoth—"the Torches"—of whom we know nothing more. Born with the grand gift of genius, she could embody her high thoughts in the rhythmical verse in which her countrymen delighted. Her songs flew far and wide, rousing a national spirit in the dispirited and demoralized tribes—painting, no doubt, the glories of the past, and the mighty deeds God had wrought for them, by the hands of leaders He had raised among them, and, it may be, taunting them with their degeneracy in submitting to be slaves. So great was her fame for wisdom, that she became the centre of moral, and even judicial, power over an ever-widening district. The palm tree is always the most striking object in any landscape, where it flourishes, and it then grew, even in the hill country of Palestine, perhaps more plentifully than now, though there is still a grove of palms not far from Nazareth, and thousands overshadow the rich lowland plains, here and there, from Beirout to Gaza, while even in Jerusalem their thin, graceful forms, and picturesque crowns of fronds, lift themselves up dreamily in the air, though in no great numbers, above the flat-roofed houses. Such a tree, which afterwards bore Deborah's name, and, perhaps, was identical with that of Baal Tamar[1]—Baal of the Palm Tree—as, either before or after her, marked by an image of the Sun-god—or a sun-pillar, worshipped under its shadow—rose near her home, and underneath this she took her seat while "the children of Israel came up to her for judgment." Thus aided, the impulse of her great soul was naturally contagious, till the whole land, from Benjamin to the far north of Naphtali,

[1] Judg. xx. 33.

was moved with a common aspiration for freedom, and a resolute determination to obtain it. New chiefs, doubtless men of vigour, were appointed,[1] to supersede for a time the local elders, and secret preparations everywhere made for a rising. A leader of the whole movement was, however, still needed, and Deborah chose one from the scene of the deepest oppression. Kadesh Naphtali, close to Jabin's capital, Hazor, and thus in the midst of the Canaanite population; a spot looking down from one of the glorious hills of Upper Galilee, on a green and well-watered valley, is said to have been the home of the proposed deliverer. Other places of the same name, without the addition, however, of their belonging to Naphtali, have been supposed a more probable locality; one, on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, south of the present Tiberias, fancied to have been an ancient holy place of the Canaanites; another on the plateau of softly undulating pasture, west of the lake: but there seems no strong reason for such conjectures. While peace lasted, Hebrews would live in every part of the Canaanite territory, and the very nearness of the chief town might well intensify patriotism in a brave heart. At Kadesh Naphtali, therefore, as we may believe, lived the chief on whom Deborah had fixed—Barak, or Barca, "the Thunderbolt"—a true-hearted Israelite, though his birthplace and home among the Canaanites had given him a Phœnician name, for Barca was the family name of the great Carthaginian general Hannibal. He must already have gained reputation, to be known so far off as the confines of Benjamin. Him Deborah summoned to her in the south, and commanded, in the name of Jehovah, as whose prophetess she spoke, to march to Mount Tabor on the plain of Esdraelon, with 10,000 men of Naphtali and

[1] Judg. v. 8.

Zebulon: promising that God would draw to him Sisera, Jabin's commander, with his chariots and his host, and deliver them into his hands. But Barak was apparently less resolute and heroic than Deborah. "He did not know," he said, "the propitious day on which the Lord would send forth His angel before him to give him the victory;"[1] she, herself, must come, to let him be sure of it, else he would not undertake the task. He could not trust the promise of God, which must be fulfilled whether Deborah went with him or not. But, if he hesitated, she knew no fear. Go with him? Assuredly she would. "But," added she, "my going will take away your glory, for the victory will be called mine, not yours." Making her way north with him, therefore, to Kadesh, which, in this case, could not be Kadesh Naphtali, but must have been farther from the Canaanite centre, the two finally organized the revolt. Messages, sent far and near, were answered by 10,000 men gathering from the two tribes, at the rendezvous at Tabor. Issachar, from the very plain of Esdraelon, for once broke away from its servitude, and sent bands of volunteers. Ephraimites gathered from their hills, the old home of Amalek,[2] the fiercest enemy of Israel; and, following them, came valiant crowds from Benjamin—the most warlike of the tribes—men skilled in the bow, and so famous with the sling, as to be reputed to throw stones to a hairbreadth, and not miss;[3] able, moreover, to use either their right or left hand with equal skill and strength. Both parts of Manasseh, also, east and west of the Jordan, rallied to the struggle, sending their chiefs as well as men.[4] It was the first time since the conquest that the national spirit had been roused to such a

[1] Septuagint. [2] See p. 552.
[3] Judg. xx. 16. 1 Chron viii. 40; xii. 2. 2 Chron. xvii. 17.
[4] Judg. v. 14.

pitch or the tribes brought to act together to such an extent. But the absent were as conspicuous as those who answered the appeal. The people of Meroz, possibly a town at the head of the pass to Bethshean, at the east end of the plain, might have done good service, but refused to come to the help of their brethren, and drew down on them a curse, which apparently was afterwards carried out by their extermination, and the utter demolition of their homes.[1] By the brooks of Reuben there were great discussions, but it ended in its clans leaving their brethren to struggle unaided, while they themselves stayed among their sheepfolds, to pipe to their flocks.[2] Gad, also, refused to come; Dan would not leave its boats at Joppa; and Asher stayed, with craven indifference, in the creeks and bays of Acre. Of the great tribe of Judah, or of Simeon, nothing is said. Jealousy of Ephraim probably kept them aloof. To Zebulon, which had been busiest enrolling volunteers,[3] was to be given the palm in the approaching battle, and Naphtali, dwelling in the hills,[4] earned also an illustrious name.

Tabor, a mountain rising 1,500 feet above the plain of Esdraelon at its north-east end, is steep on the north, but bare and shapeless on the south, and stands isolated, except on the west, where a narrow ridge connects it with the hills of Nazareth. It is still covered with stunted oaks, pistachios, and other trees and undergrowth, in which the fallow deer finds a home, but its top is treeless, and forms a comparatively level circuit of half an hour's walk, commanding wide views of the plain from end to end.[5] No spot could have been better chosen for the rendezvous of Israel, for it could not be attacked by the chariots of the Canaanites, and its

[1] Judg. v. 23.
[2] Judg. v. 15, 16.
[3] Judg. v. 14.
[4] Judg. v. 18.
[5] A village on the slopes of Tabor still bears the name of Deborah.

summit[1] afforded a lofty watch-tower from which Deborah and Barak could see all their movements.

The great plain of Esdraelon—the largest open space in Palestine—extends over sixteen miles from Jenin, formerly Engannim, on the south, to the foot of the hills below Nazareth, on the north. This line passes Jezreel at the west foot of the hills of Gilboa, a mass of gray heights stretching into the plain thus far, from the south-east, and filling up, with the exception of two bays, one, on the south of them, the other on the north. From the end of these to the other end of the plain on the north-west, is about twenty-five miles, and this great stretch is bordered on both sides by rounded hills; those of Carmel[2] on the south; those of Lower Galilee on the north. At the bottom of the upper bay, looking over a green interval to the hills of Gilboa, with Nain and Endor on their lower slope, rises Mount Tabor, which sinks into the plain by a soft descent, through its rich clouds of boscage shewing open spots of green. You can ride to the top of the hill from any side, as far as steepness goes, and a force might consequently charge down from any part of it. The great plain, undulating from its foot, is of deep volcanic soil, and thus especially fertile. Its whole surface, which is from two hundred to two hundred and fifty feet above the sea, is undulating, but only slightly so, and is silent and unpeopled; villages being found only in the neighbouring hills, where there is comparative safety from Arab incursions. No important town, indeed, has ever stood on the plain itself. Its wide area, as well as the slopes of the hills on both sides, are drained by the torrent Kishon, which rises from beneath Mount Tabor, countless

[1] *The Great Map of Palestine Survey*, Sheet VI., gives the height as 1,850 feet *above the sea*.

[2] Height 1,600 feet. *Great Map of Palestine Survey*, Sheet IX.

shallow watercourses, with which the whole plain is seamed, carrying the rains to it from all parts, so that while its channel is dry or nearly dry in the rainless months, it is filled with a torrent in a few hours after a storm. Most of the land is now covered with thorns and thistles, for want of inhabitants, but the whole plain, and also part of the hills, is now owned by a rich Syrian banking firm—that of the Sursuks—who thus, in effect, are also the owners of about five thousand human beings, forming the population of thirty villages on their property. The firm draws an income of about forty thousand pounds from their investment, but it is to be hoped that an immigration of energetic and practical settlers may before long rescue at least part of this wide territory from the grasp of the money-lenders, who are now sucking the life-blood from its population.

The Kishon, or "winding," begins its single channel in the north-west of the plain, and after rains, pours through a deep, tortuous bed, about 15 feet deep and 15 to 20 yards wide, into the Bay of Acre. The most dangerous part in its course, however, is close to Tabor, where the springs from which it rises form a chain of pools and brooks, fringed with reeds and rushes, and speedily turned into a wide and treacherous quagmire after rain. Here, "at Endor,"[1] Sisera's host was doomed to be mired and to perish.

The plain of Esdraelon has in all ages been the battle-field of Palestine. Here fought Thothmes III., Rameses II., and Rameses III.; here Pharaoh Necho won that sad battle of Megiddo, in which King Josiah was slain, amidst a slaughter so terrible that the great conflict of the Apocalypse is called, from it, the battle of Armageddon—"the hill of

[1] Ps. lxxxiii. 10.

Megiddo."[1] Here have fought in turn the armies of Assyria, of the Crusaders, and of Bonaparte, and it was on the mountains of Gilboa, at the east end, that Saul and Jonathan perished.

News of the gathering of the tribes had been conveyed to Sisera, the commander of the forces of Jabin and his allies, by the Kenites of Zaanaim—a spot still bearing the same name, on the plateau over the Sea of Galilee, east of Tabor[2]—an Arab tribe which, though for the time on terms of peace with Jabin, had always been friendly with Israel, from the remembrance of the marriage of Moses to the daughter of its sheik Jethro. A part of it had remained in the wilderness south of Judah, but another branch had moved north and pitched its tents, for the time, under the terebinths of Zaanaim—the place of "wanderings." With Arab duplicity they now betrayed Israel, as their chief's wife was presently to betray its arch enemy.[3]

The commander of the Canaanite army bore the title of Sisera—"the Leader"—and appears to have been the vassal king of Harosheth, so called from the beautiful woods above the Kishon. The Tell, or mound which now marks its site, is of great size and double, and rises just below a point where the Kishon, in one of its turns, beats against the rocky base of Carmel, leaving no room even for a foot-path, so that a stronghold standing there would effectually command the pass up the valley of the Kishon into Esdraelon. It was then, no doubt, a strong fortress, overlooking the country

[1] The site of Megiddo seems to have been identified by Conder in Migedda, at the foot of Gilboa -a mound, from which five springs, "the Waters of Megiddo," burst forth. *Tent Work*, p. 232. The position hitherto assigned it, close to Legio, is therefore, apparently, incorrect.

[2] Judg. iv. 11. See also *Tent Work*, p. 69.

[3] Judg. iv. 12.

[4] Kneucker thinks it means "the guard of the land;" others translate it "the clearings," or "the quarries."

which its lord had subdued; but there is now only a miser-

TABOR, FROM THE SUMMIT OF JEBEL DUHY. Major Conder, R.E.
By permission of the Committee of the Palestine Fund.

able village, at the spot where, through a narrow gorge, the stream, hidden amongst oleander bushes, enters the plain of

Acre. Collecting his forces in Esdraelon—the only place in northern Palestine where chariots had favourable ground for their manœuvres, he made his headquarters at Taanach, a Canaanite town and fortress at the south-west of the plain, on a long spur of the Carmel range, now clad with olive-trees, and marked by a stone village still called Taanak. From this place Tabor rose at a distance of about sixteen miles to the north-east : its top just visible above the swell of the Gilboa hills known as Little Hermon, sixteen hundred feet high, with the two villages Endor and Nain clinging to its rough slopes at its foot.

On the day of the battle the whole force of Sisera had advanced across the plain to the green sweep at the foot of Tabor, opposite the hamlet of Endor. Dark clouds and high wind shewed that a storm was on the point of bursting, and the rain would paralyze the charioteers by sinking the wheels in the spongy soil and making them immovable.

The signal for attack was given by Deborah. "Up," cried she to Barak ; "this, this, and no other is the day."[1] And, forthwith, the ill-armed host of Hebrew footmen bravely poured down from the mountain security to rush on the chariots of the enemy, drawn up below, in the open plain. As the two ill-matched forces met, a terrible storm of sleet and hail from the east burst over them ; on the backs of the Hebrews and in the faces of the Canaanites, turning the deep red soil into a quagmire in which their chariots could not move, and filling the dry watercourses with rushing torrents, in which many of them were overwhelmed. So great, indeed, was the carnage that, centuries after, a Psalmist speaks of the dead as manuring the ground.[2] The day was hopelessly lost to Sisera, and

[1] Septuagint. [2] Ps. lxxxiii. 10.

nothing remained but to try to escape with life. Leaving his chariot, he fled on foot to the north-east, under the slopes of Tabor, across the great lava plateau, on which stood, near the site of the modern ruined village Bessum,[1] the black tents of Heber the Kenite, his master's ally, where he might hope for temporary refuge.

The tents of the Arabs have in all ages been the same. They are simply a long shed of camel's or goat's hair cloth, supported on a slight framework of rough poles—nine in all—the back lower than the front, which is open, except when the weather induces the inmates to let down the tent covering, usually thrown back over the roof. On the left as you enter a portion of the tent is curtained off as the women's quarter, into which no man but the husband would dream of entering.[2] In this are gathered the cooking utensils, the skin water-bottles, the milk, the butter, etc. The bed, as usual in the East, is only a mat or two laid on the ground, or on a bank of earth raised at the side of the tent; the cloak worn by day serving as a covering by night. The poles which hold up this frail dwelling are kept in position by ropes of camel's hair reaching out from the edges of the tent cover, being stretched to their utmost and fastened into the ground by pegs, driven fast by a mallet. Such was a tent in which I drank coffee on the way from Gaza to Hebron—one of several belonging to men who were then dodging the Turkish soldiers, in search of them for a murder committed by one of their number in the streets of Gaza, through a blood feud; and the look and structure of one is the look and structure of all.

Such, therefore, no doubt, was the tent of Heber. In the open front Sisera found Jael, the sheik's wife, and

[1] *Tent Work*, p. 69.

[2] See illustration, page 238 of this volume.

trusting to the peace between Jabin and the tribe, asked her for passing shelter. Whether she intended treachery from the first cannot be known. Receiving him graciously, she not only offered him the protection he asked, but took him into her own division of the tent, which, as I have said, no man would think of entering in search of him.[1] But her next act looks like premeditated betrayal. The Arabs are fond of curdled milk, called by them "Lebben;" but whilst refreshing to one who is tired and hot, it also acts as a strong and speedy soporific.[2] On the request of the fugitive for water to quench his overpowering thirst, Jael eagerly brought him a draught of Lebben, in a special dish, the pride of her tent;[3] not, perhaps, without the knowledge of its sure effect in casting the drinker into a deep and long sleep. The inviting beverage finished, the weary man lies down, doubtless grateful to his benefactor, and uttering many thanks in his feeling of perfect safety, as Jael carefully covered him with a cloak. He had partaken of Arab hospitality, and had her repeated assurances that she would keep his presence secret. But the sight of the great foe of Israel, a race of her own blood, asleep before her, as he presently was, soon raised far other thoughts than he had dreamed possible—if, indeed, she had not entertained them before. What a service it would be if she could free her kindred people from their oppressor! Nor did the suggestion long wait for the act. Taking up one of the tent pegs and the mallet used to drive it, she crept silently to her victim, sunk in the sleep of the weary, and with a terrible blow drove the bolt, crashing, through his temples,

[1] Pococke writes: "I was kept in the harem for greater security, no stranger ever daring to come into the women's apartment, unless introduced." See p. 439, note 4.

[2] *Tent Work*, p. 70.

[3] Judg. v. 25.

with such force that it entered the ground on which he had been lying. One convulsive bound and a contortion of agony, and he was a lifeless corpse. "Between her feet" (as she strode over him), says the Song of Deborah, "he sank, he fell down, he lay dying."[1]

The results of Deborah's victory were felt in many directions. No other battle needed ever after to be fought with the Canaanites; and the Israelites themselves learned a lesson of the advantages of national union, which influenced their whole future. Their self-reliance, moreover, was strengthened; for it was their first great victory since the days of Joshua, and they had gained it against the most discouraging odds. As a lesson in war it was invaluable, and its results quickened the passion for freedom which had already begun to root itself in the heart of Israel. Nor was it without a powerful effect on their religious history, that their national degradation and misery had ended as soon as they abandoned idolatry, and sought the favour and help of Jehovah. That the result was due to Him, and not to themselves, however valiantly they had fought, was not only proudly owned, but enshrined in the poetry of the nation, as the prevailing note of the odes and lyrics which an occasion so august called forth. Thus, the magnificent "Song of Deborah" opens with its acknowledgment, and it forms the key-note throughout.

> That the leaders acted as became them in Israel,
> That the people showed themselves valiant,[2]
> Praise ye Jehovah!

[1] Judg. v. 27.

[2] Paulus Cassel translates the first two lines:

> "That the long hair of the valiant hung wild on Israel
> In the consecration of the people—Praise Jehovah!"

But this seems very fanciful.

Hear, O ye Kings! give ear, O Princes;
I to Jehovah, even I, will sing;
I will sound the harp to Jehovah, Israel's God!

Jehovah! when thou wentest forth from Seir,
When thou marchedst hither from the land of Edom,
The earth trembled and the heavens streamed down;

The clouds poured forth waters;
The mountains melted before Jehovah—
Sinai (flowed down) before the face of Jehovah, before the God of Israel!

The guilt of Meroz was, that it did not come to the help of Jehovah, and the victory is over His enemies. The dimly felt honour of being the people of God thus first took an articulate form, and henceforth became a mighty power in the nation.

A striking parallel to the victory of Deborah is recorded by Plutarch in his Life of Timoleon. That general, at the battle at the River Crimesus, near Segesta, in north-western Sicily, had attacked the Carthaginians; but their heavy armour and stout shields easily repelled the Greek spears. Suddenly, however, when it had come to sword thrusts, violent peals of thunder, and vivid flashes of light, burst from the mountains, and the darkness which had been hovering about the higher grounds and crests of the hills, descended on the place of battle, bringing a tempest of rain, wind, and hail with it, on the backs of the Greeks, but full in the faces of the Carthaginians. The rain beating on them and the lightning dazzling them, distressed the inexperienced; and, in particular, the claps of the thunder, and the noise of the rain and hail beating on their arms, prevented them from hearing the command of their officers. In addition to this, the very mud was a great hindrance to the Carthaginians,

who were loaded with heavy armour; and their shirts, underneath, getting drenched, the foldings about the bosom filled with water, and grew cumbersome to them as they fought; making it easy for the Greeks to throw them down, and impossible for them to rise again, with weapons in their hands. The River Crimesus, also, swollen, partly by the rain, and partly by the stoppage of its course from the numbers passing through it, overflowed its banks, and the level ground on its sides was filled with rivulets and currents that had no certain channel, in which the Carthaginians stumbled and rolled about, and found themselves in great difficulty.[1]

As the most ancient of Hebrew lyrics, Deborah's song has a supreme interest. The following is a literal version of the part of it not already quoted:

In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath,
In the days of Jael,[2] the roads lay idle,
And wanderers went round about by secret paths.

Leaders[3] had ceased in Israel; there were none
Till thou didst arise, O Deborah, as leader:
Till thou arose as Mother in Israel.[4]

They chose new holy judges:
Then were the gates of (the enemy's) towns taken by storm,
Though neither shield nor spear could be seen
Among forty thousand of Israel.

My heart thanks you, ye leaders of Israel,
And you brave ones who freely offered yourselves from the people;
Praise ye Jehovah (with me)!

Ye who ride on white dappled she asses;
Ye who sit on fine carpets;

[1] Plutarch, *Timoleon*. Dryden's Translation.

[2] Some unknown person. It speaks of the past and cannot refer to the wife of Heber. For Deborah's song, see Judg. v. 2-31.

[3] Herder has "popular assemblies" instead of "leaders."

[4] Graetz.

And ye (poor ones) that walk on the roads,
Sing ye!

Clear rising from the sweet singers, where they water the flocks,
Let men praise the righteous deeds of Jehovah;
The righteous deeds of His leading in Israel,
For then did the people storm the gates of their foes.

Up then! Up then! Deborah!
Up then! Up then! sing the song of battle!
Up, Barak! and lead back thy captives,
Thou son of Abinoam!

Then a small band of chiefs and of the people rushed down:
Jehovah, Himself, went down, to my help, amongst the mighty;
From Ephraim (came) those whose root is in Amalek,[1]
After them, Benjamin, thou, with thy people!

The leaders came down out of Machir,[2]
And from Zebulon those who held the rod of the chief;
And the princes of Issachar, with Deborah;
Issachar pressed close behind Barak, on foot, into the valley.

By the streams of Reuben there are great consultations!
Why lingerest thou, in the sheep folds, to hear the strains of the pipe?
By the streams of Reuben are great consultations!

Gilead stays on the other side Jordan;
And Dan—why drawest thou thy boats to the beach?[3]

Asher sits by the edge of the sea,
And clings to his harbours.
Zebulon is a people throwing away his life to the death,
And Naphtali—on the heights of the land!

The kings came—they fought,
The kings of Canaan delivered battle
At Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo.

[1] The hills of Amalek; the old name of the hills of Ephraim.
[2] Manasseh. Machir is usually Eastern, but, here, it includes Western Manasseh, also.
[3] Graetz.

—But not even a piece of silver have they won!
The skies themselves fought (for us),
The very stars, from their paths, fought against Sisera.[1]

The stream Kishon washed them away,
The brave stream—the stream Kishon!
Step forth now, my soul, with pride![2]

Then stamped the hoofs of the horses,
In the swift flight of the mighty ones!

"Curse ye Meroz," cried the messenger of Jehovah,
"With a curse curse her inhabitants,
Because they did not come to the help of Jehovah,
To the help of Jehovah, among the heroes!"

Blessed above women be Jael,
The wife of Heber the Kenite—
Blessed above women, in the tent!

He begged for water, she gave him milk:
In the bowl of the sheik she handed him cream:
But she stretched out her hand to the tent pin;
Her right hand to the hammer of the workman,
And hammered Sisera; shivered his skull;
Broke it in pieces; pierced through his temples!
Between her feet he drew himself up, he fell, he lay;
Between her feet he drew himself up, and fell—
Where he drew himself up, there fell he, dying.

Behind the window lattice, ajar, looks out
The mother of Sisera, and frets—
"Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why are its wheels so slow?"

The wisest of her ladies answer her
—She herself repeating the words—
"For certain they have found and are dividing the spoil;

[1] "The season was probably that of the autumn storms, which occur early in November. At this time the meteoric showers are commonest, and are remarkably fine in effect, seen in the evening light at a season when the air is specially clear and bright. The scene presented by the fiery falling stars, as the defeated host fled away by night, is one very striking to the fancy, and would form a fine subject for the artist's pencil." *Tent Work*, p. 70.

[2] Vigouroux makes this line—"And I have trampled under foot the strong."

—A girl, ay, two girls, for each man ;
Plunder of rich coloured stuffs for Sisera—plunder of embroidered rich coloured stuffs, for the neck of his queen !
A coloured twice embroidered piece for the neck of his queen ! "

So perish all thine enemies, Jehovah !
But may they that love Him be like the sun, when he rises in his might !

A difficulty has been found by some in the praise given by Deborah to Jael for what must be held, according to our better light, a treacherous murder. But it cannot be just to transfer to remote and rude nations, in which ideas of morality were necessarily imperfect, the standard gradually accepted by ourselves, eighteen centuries after the higher revelation of Jesus Christ. Nor is there any Divine sanction of Jael's deed, though Deborah, in the exultation of victory, saw only its bearing on the freedom of her people.

CHAPTER XVI.

GIDEON TO SAMSON.

The dates of the incidents recorded in the Book of Judges are necessarily perplexing, since some of them may have been contemporaneous; but we cannot be wrong in assigning, if only from internal evidence, the rise of Gideon, the greatest of all the Judges, to a period considerably later than that of Deborah.

The story of the past had painfully repeated itself. Peace and prosperity had lowered the moral tone of the tribes, and time had softened that abhorrence of idolatry which had been kindled by the enthusiasm of Deborah. Disunion, and, with it, the virtual lapse of all government, had made the tribes an easy prey to any vigorous foe, whom the attractions of their territory, or the lust of conquest, might bring against them. And such an enemy too soon appeared.

The scourge of God by which He was, this time, to bring them to a better mind, was an invasion of the Arab tribes of the deserts east and south of Palestine: the Midianites who had gradually spread northwards from the Peninsula of Sinai;—and the old enemies of Israel, the Amalekites, whom they had fought at Sinai; by whom they had been defeated at Hormah, in their first attempt to enter Palestine; and who, in alliance with Eglon, the Moabite, had oppressed Benjamin, but whose lands in central Canaan, Ephraim had now made its own. With these, moreover, were joined

a number of other Arab tribes, known as the Sons of the East. The plains and glens of Palestine had in all ages been the very "gates of Paradise" to these dwellers in the waste, as indeed they still are to their descendants. Banding together in a vast host of 120,000 men "that drew sword,"[1] they now streamed over the fords of the Jordan, year by year—migrating thither, with their households and herds, in such numbers as could only be compared, by those whom they invaded, to a flight of locusts; which, indeed, they rivalled in destructiveness. The results to the country may be judged from those of similar Bedouin inroads, on a small scale, in our own day. A few years ago the whole Ghor, or depressed channel of the Jordan, was in the hands of the fellahin, or peasants, and much of it was sown with corn. Now, the whole of it is held by the Bedouins, who eschew all agriculture, leaving the few spots needed for their wants, to be cultivated by their slaves. The same thing is going on all over the plain of Sharon, where, both in the north and south, land is going back to a state of nature, and whole villages vanishing from the face of the earth. Since 1838 no fewer than twenty have been thus erased from the map, and their scanty population extirpated.[2] Except on the eastern branches, there is not now a single inhabited village in the whole plain of Esdraelon, and not more than a sixth of its soil is cultivated. The peasants prefer an hour's hard climb to a safe home in the hills on each side, to living in the open, which wild Arabs ever and anon scour on their fleet horses, in hope of plunder. In Gideon's day, their inroads were not only on a gigantic scale, but were systematically repeated each summer; the standing grain being trampled under foot and eaten, by their flocks and camels, which

[1] Judg. viii. 10.

[2] Tristram's *Land of Israel*, p. 494.

were let loose on them ; the threshed crops carried off, with all the sheep or oxen or asses they could find, over the wide stretch from Esdraelon in the north, to Gaza, in the distant south-west.

War has always been cruel, but it was infinitely more so in antiquity than now, nameless and awful as are the sufferings it entails at the best. The story of Sinuhit, which is at least as old as the days of Abraham, tells us how it was waged even in the petty raids of chief on chief.

"Every land," says he, "which I visited, I caused to yield
Of the forage of its pastures. I divided its cattle among my men,
I took away its women and children as slaves :
I smote the men.[1]

* * * * *

He wished to divide my cattle
Among the troop of his followers :[2]
He wished to take from me my oxen, bulls and goats.

* * * * *

I devoted (that is, sacrificed) his wives to Montu (the Egyptian god of war),
I took his goods, I divided his cattle (among my men),
I took possession of the things that were in his house,
I stripped his chamber ;
I got great treasure and wealth, I got much cattle.[3]

No wonder that the Israelites betook themselves to the fissures and clefts of the hills, and to the caverns with which they are everywhere honeycombed throughout Palestine.[4]

The vast host was under two emirs, Zebah, "the man-killer ;" and Zalmunna, "the pitiless ;"[5] with two subordinate sheiks, Oreb, "the raven ;" and Zeeb, "the wolf ;"[6]

[1] *Story of Sinuhit*, 150–153.
[2] *Ibid.*, 166, 167.
[3] *Ibid*, 205, 208–212.
[4] Judg. vi. 2.
[5] Literally, "Shadow is denied."
[6] Similar names are still common among the Arab chiefs east of the Jordan, as they also are among the North American Indians.

the four—as they led on their wild followers—arrayed in scarlet cloaks,[1] like the sheiks of to-day, with gold chains and crescent-shaped ornaments round the necks of their camels, and on their own persons; their hordes, as well as themselves, wearing gold ear-rings, and their wives and daughters nose jewels, in addition.[2] Mounting from the depths of the Jordan valley, probably by the Wady el Jalud, past the meadows of Bethshean, their first attraction on the west of the river, they pitched their tents, far and near, on the east end of Esdraelon, from Gilboa westwards. Such a host, on a smaller scale, is described by Leslie Porter,[3] as seen by him in the spring of 1857, when the Bedouin sheik, Akeil Agha, assembled his men in Esdraelon, after the massacre of the Kurds at Hattin, to divide the plunder. "They spread over the plain, countless as locusts; their camels beyond number, like the sands on the seashore. When I looked at the wild and fierce crowds of this disorderly army, on the spoils and booty, it seemed as if I had before me the very spectacle of the great invasion of the Midianites in the days of Gideon."

Prophets[4] had been sent to Israel, urging its sons to return to Jehovah, as the only means of averting this calamity, but the land had been wasted for seven successive years before they listened to them, and penitently sought the one great Deliverer—often tried and never failing—the God of their fathers. Then, at last, the Ever-Merciful raised a helper for them.

Among the clans or "thousands" of Western Manasseh, one of the poorest[5] was that descended from Abiezer, a son

[1] Judg. viii. 26.
[2] Judg. viii. 25, 26.
[3] *Handbook for Palestine*, p. 346.
[4] Judg. vi. 8.
[5] Perhaps "poorest" means "feeblest."

of Gilead, the grandson of the patriarch Manasseh ;[1] but in the households of this humble sept, that of Joash seems to have held a foremost place. He had boasted of a family of magnificent sons, "each like the son of a king ;"[2] but all, save the youngest, had fallen on Mount Tabor, in endless fights with these Midianites.[3] Thus the seven years of misery had not passed in weak submission, though the brave spirits of the land had only lost their lives in the vain struggle. Even the youngest son, Gideon, "the tree-feller," that is, the impetuous warrior, had already earned such a name as "a mighty man of valour," that the Midianites themselves were afraid of him.[4] His home and fields were at Ophrah, probably the present village Fer'ata, six miles west of Shechem, its old name having actually been Ophrah ; and he already had grown sons,[5] and a separate household, with his own body of slaves, and even an armour bearer.[6]

Modest, like all truly great men, Gideon had not thought of heading a general revolt, till roused directly by God to do so. A vision appeared to him, under circumstances illustrating the sad state of the times. He was at the moment busy beating out wheat, cut down probably almost before it was ripe, in the poor substitute for a threshing floor offered by the shallow bottom of his wine-press—a rude vat cut out in the limestone near a terebinth tree ;[7] a spot safer from the greedy eyes of the Midianites than an ordinary threshing floor in the open field would have been. A divine intimation was there given him, to rise against the invaders, but, as in the case of Moses, only a miracle finally overcame the self-distrust which, in his humility, for a time kept him back.

[1] Josh. xvii. 2. [2] Judg. viii. 18.
[3] Judg. viii. 19. [4] Judg. vii. 14.
[5] Judg. viii. 20. [6] Judg. vi. 27 ; vii. 10. [7] Judg. vi. 11.

That very day saw the reality of the "new spirit from God," with which, as the narrative tells us, he was clothed.[1] Building an altar on the spot hallowed by the visit of the angel, he dedicated it to Jehovah-Shalom—"Jehovah (who brings) better days."[2] Joash, his father, had so far yielded to the evil ways of the time, as to have built an altar to Baal, on the top of the height used as a "look-out" and rude fort, and also an Asherah, a rough wooden pillar—part of the stem of a tree—the symbol of the goddess of fertility, and worshipped as such—at its side; but the new altar to Jehovah could not tolerate such abominations near it. Waiting till darkness fell, Gideon bravely threw down the one, with the help of ten of his slaves, and not only cut down the other, but split it up for fuel; and having laid it on an altar which he had built from the loose stones lying, no doubt, thickly around, to Jehovah, used it to consume, in sacrifice to Him, a bullock which his father had apparently consecrated to Baal. But the brave deed was like to have cost him dear; for the people of Ophrah, afraid of the wrath of Baal, would fain have stoned him, when they discovered it, and were only kept from doing so by the clever irony of Joash, who reminded them that, if Baal were a god, he would defend himself.[3]

Meanwhile, the annual invasion of the Arab host had taken place, but Gideon was now prepared. Sounding the war horns through his district, his own clan of Abiezer at once rallied to him. Messengers were then sent through all Western Manasseh, Asher, Zebulon, and Naphtali, the tribes nearest Esdraelon, and they also obeyed its summons. But the strength of the enemy, and the failure of previous

[1] Judg. vi. 34. [2] Literally, "Jehovah-peace."

[3] The name "Jerubbaal," given henceforth to Gideon, means, according to Ewald, "the Contender for God;" Köhler makes it, "the Contender against Baal."

efforts against them, made even Gideon still hesitate. All irresolution, however, was at last removed by a double sign of the presence and help of Jehovah—the fleece[1] wet with the heavy moisture of the night wind from the sea, and then, in turn, left dry—signs, says Ewald, illustrating Gideon's own character; warm and zealous, while all around were indifferent and cold; calm and cool, when all around were excited.[2] No fewer than 33,000 men had answered his call to battle, but he felt that so many were not needed, at least for the first attack. Proclaiming through the host that all who were faint-hearted were free to depart, no fewer than 22,000 withdrew. But even the 11,000 left were more than were needed for a victory in which Jehovah was to make bare His arm. At the foot of Mount Gilboa, in the north-east of Esdraelon, flows even now a copious spring, known as Ain Jalud, formerly Ain Harod, "the Spring of Trembling," from the scene it witnessed in Gideon's story.[3] It streams from under a huge rock, worn out, within, to a cavern, and forms a great pool of the purest water, in the shape of a half circle, from which many could drink at once. There are now numbers of little fish in it, and the bottom has at one time been paved, but many of the stones are out of their places. Pouring from this, the water flows in two

[1] The night wind from the sea is laden in Palestine with moisture which falls in heavy, dew-like abundance over all the land, and is indeed called "dew" in Scripture and by most travellers. On the sands near Cæsarea I have seen great crops of water-melons, created, one may say, on mere sand, by this nightly watering. Others have noticed similar phenomena. "It costs us as much trouble," says Irwin, "to protect ourselves from the dew by night, as from the heat by day. So heavy is it that in the morning the coverings under which we had lain are as wet as if they had been dipped in the sea." Rosenmüller, *Alte und Neue Morgenl.*, vol. iii. p. 32. Often, says Furrer, the dew is so heavy that the tents seem in the morning to have been soaked with heavy rain. *Bib. Lex.*, vol. v. p. 496.

[2] Ewald, vol. ii. p. 542.

[3] Conder suggests, instead of Ain Jalud, a spring near Bethshean, called by the fellahin, Ain el Jem'ain, "the Spring of the Two Troops." *Mem. of Survey*, ii. 79–81.

channels, partly lined with stone, which turn two mills close at hand, and then flow on to the east, to make their way down the steep Wady el Jalud, to the Jordan.

To this basin Gideon led his men to drink, carefully noting who were cool and self-restrained enough, even with the enemy near, to lift the water composedly in their hand as a cup, and selecting them as those on whom he could safely trust; all who, in their fear, knelt hurriedly down and dipped their faces in the spring being sent away. But the number left was only 300. With these, however, he determined to assail the innumerable foe; nor were they backward in daring—so high had his spirit and theirs now risen. Providing every man with a horn, a torch, and an earthen pot, he disclosed his plan: that the 300 should divide into three equal companies, and approach the Arab camp, from opposite sides, in the dead of the night. Then, at a signal from his war horn, all, in a moment, should break their pots, and, displaying their blazing torches, rush on with the terrible war cry of Israel, to the shout of "For Jehovah and Gideon"—"The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon!" The use of the same stratagem, strangely, reappears in an Arab battle, in the middle of last century, described by Niebuhr; and in Egypt, in our own day, the use of pitchers or pots, to hide lights, is familiar. "The Zabit or Agha of police," says Lane, "in making his nightly rounds, bears a torch which burns without flame, except when waved briskly through the air, but then it lights up at once. The end is sometimes hidden in a small earthenware jar, or covered in some other way, when the flame is not wished to be seen."[1]

Everything was now ready, but, for his final assurance, Gideon, by a providential impulse, resolved to make matters

[1] Lane's *Modern Egyptians*, vol. i. p. 120, fifth edition.

doubly sure by venturing, with Phurah, his armour-bearer, into the camp of the Midianites, in the dead of the night. Stealing down the hill-side, therefore, the two crept, unnoticed, to the outside of the host, which like all Arab armies had no sentinels. There, Gideon had the joy of hearing one tell his neighbour a dream he had had, of a barley cake—the commonest kind of bread—having tumbled into the host of Midian, striking against the tent of the emir in command, and overthrowing it, so that it "lay along." "That can be nothing else," replied the listener, "than the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel—his God has delivered Midian and all our host into his hand."

Returning, with a grateful heart, he now sent off the three companies at once to their posts, and, on the signal being given, about eleven o'clock at night,[1] the hills around blazed with three hundred torches, and echoed with the blast of three hundred horns, and the fierce war shouts of the assailants. A panic instantly seized the unorganized Arab camp, encumbered with herds and camels, besides women and children. Fleeing for life, amidst wild cries of alarm, each thinking his neighbour an enemy, the vast multitude poured in hideous confusion down the steep and rough descent of Wady el Jalud, towards the ford of the Jordan, to reach their own side of the stream. But Gideon would not let them escape. The thousands of the northern tribes who had come out to his aid, were instantly sent in pursuit; and messengers hastened off through all the hill country of Ephraim, to rouse the men of that great tribe, to seize the fords in their territory, and cut off the fugitives.

[1] The beginning of the middle watch. There were three: from sunset to 10 P.M.; from 10 to 2 A.M.; and from 2 A.M. to sunrise.

Part had already, however, made their escape for the time, probably over the ford of Beth-Bara, just above the entrance of the Jalud into the Jordan, but Ephraim reached the lower fords in time to arrest the retreat of the great body of the flying hordes, with their two secondary leaders, the sheiks Oreb and Zeeb. The slaughter here was so terrible, that Isaiah speaks of the disaster that overtook the Arabs, as only to be ranked with that of Egypt at the Red Sea, or the destruction of the host of Sennacherib.[1] Nor is he alone among the sacred writers, in this estimate of the greatness of Gideon's victory. In imagery, both obvious and vivid, to every native of the hills and plains of Palestine, the author of the eighty-third Psalm[2] describes the enemy as driven over the uplands of Gilead, like the chaff blown from the threshing floors; chased away like the rootless dry weeds, which come, in rolling globes, before the wind, over the levels of Esdraelon and Philistia; as flying with the fierce haste and wild confusion of the flames on a wooded mountain, as they leap from tree to tree and hill to hill, when by chance set on fire in the drought of a tropical climate. Among the rest, fell the two leaders: the one at a rock, which henceforth bore his name—Oreb; the other at a wine-press, henceforth known as Zeeb.[3]

Gideon, meanwhile, was no less resolute to make the victory as decisive as possible. He had gained two battles, but a third was needed, and therefore crossing the Jordan, he and his men, "faint, yet pursuing," followed the course taken by Zeba and Zalmunna, the two emirs who had been over all the host, and at last overtook them at Karkor, perhaps near Kenath in the Hauran, and there finally scattered the remnant, numbering 10,000, who had still kept to-

[1] Isa. x. 26. [2] Ps. lxxxiii. 13, 14. [3] Judg. vii. 25.

gether, and took the two princes alive. Never was deliverance more complete. As we have already seen, the day of Midian, "with its confused noise and its garments rolled in blood," was still fresh in the popular mind in the days of Isaiah,[1] and the Hebrew poet, in after ages, could find no fitter emblem of the destruction of the enemies of his people, than that their nobles should be made like Oreb and like Zeeb, and their princes as Zebah and as Zalmunna.[2]

So magnificent a triumph raised Gideon at once to the highest honour, and led the tribes who had benefited so greatly by his leadership, to offer him kingly rank, for himself and his family after him. But he was as modest as he was great and brave. The times, indeed, were not yet ripe for monarchy, though the union and strength it would bring were overcoming the aversion of the nation to central power. Yet it is certain that few men have ever been fitter for the highest rank. Even his appearance was kingly.[3] He could be stern when necessary, as when he ordered the elders of two towns east of the Jordan—Succoth and Penuel—that had refused to give food to his men, in their long pursuit of the common enemy, to be beaten to death with the terrible thorns of the acacia;[4] but he could be wise and temperate also, as when he calmed the anger of Ephraim at not having been summoned to the fight in the beginning, by telling them that their victory, since it slew Oreb and Zeeb, was greater than his own, though he knew that the haughty tribe would not have followed him, a man of Manasseh, a tribe which Ephraim despised, and therefore we may presume had not earlier called on them to come after him.[5]

[1] Isa. ix. 4, 5. [2] Ps. lxxxiii. 11. See also 1 Sam. xii. 11. Isa. x. 26. Heb. xi. 32.
[3] Judg. viii. 18.
[4] Judg. viii. 16. "Taught," in our version, is translated "threshed," in the Septuagint, Vulgate, and by Gesenius and Bertheau. [5] Judg. viii. 3.

The last notice of this great man throws a striking light on the imperfect religious ideas of the times. Instead of the royalty offered him, he had only asked for the golden earrings[1] taken from the Arab host, that he might dedicate them to Jehovah. But he did so in a way that shewed the superstitious darkness of the age. No less a weight of gold thus procured than 1,700 shekels, had been cast as a cheerful gift on his wide cloak, spread out on the ground to receive it. This he forthwith caused to be made into a gorgeous ephod, to be worn by himself, or by a Levite, as an oracle; in superstitious and unauthorized imitation of the ephod of the high priest at Shiloh, from the Urim and Thummim on which Divine responses were given. Henceforth that place was thus no longer the religious centre for the northern tribes; Gideon's oracle rising as a powerful rival to it. Nor was this all. The ephod seems ultimately to have become an object of idolatrous worship, leading the people astray from the service of Jehovah. But in so dark an age, with the Mosaic system so feebly established that Gideon, though not a priest, had himself been divinely ordered to offer sacrifice,[2] it is easy to understand the error of even so stanch a worshipper of Jehovah.

The noble fidelity which declined the crown, because Jehovah was already the rightful king,[3] found little response in the bosom of some, at least, of those whom he had so nobly served. It was natural that among his numerous sons, ambition should shew itself after his death. He had imitated royalty in one point only—that of having numerous wives; one, a slave woman of Shechem,[4] a son of

[1] Negem = generally nose jewels, but here, in the case of men having worn them, ear-rings. Yet as women also had been among the Midianites, there would be nose jewels also.

[2] Judg. vi. 26.

[3] Judg. viii. 23.

[4] Judg. viii. 31.

whom exhibited a sad contrast to his father. The rich booty of all kinds yielded by the great victory over Midian, had doubtless caused great changes in a people so simple, and introduced a taste for show, and a pride of life, which would especially be seen in the towns. A closer union with the eagerly commercial Phœnicians was one of the results; the larger towns becoming, more than hitherto, marts for Canaanitish merchandise, and homes for colonies of the heathen. Apparently to give these foreigners security for their persons and property, and to protect their caravans, coming and going, leagues were formed, under the sanction of their god, Baal-berith or El-berith, the "protector of the covenant," and a temple was allowed to be built to him in Shechem,[1] and perhaps in other towns also.

In this growing prosperity local rivalries found a proportionate impulse. Ophrah, which was probably a Manassite town, seemed likely to throw Shechem, the old capital of Ephraim, into the shade, by the presence and influence of Gideon's sons, who bore themselves, as a whole, worthily of their great father. But Abimelech, his one unworthy son, lent himself only too readily to the jealous hatred of the haughty tribe. Seeing his opportunity for personal advancement, in the heated state of local feeling, he planned with his mother's family in Shechem, that the city and its connected towns should choose him for king, and thus raise themselves, finally, above Ophrah. It was better for them, he hinted, to be ruled over by one man than by seventy, the number of Gideon's sons. Besides, he was their "bone and their flesh." The bait took. A subsidy was procured from

[1] Graetz thinks that the league was not one of Israelitish towns among themselves, but rather for the protection of foreigners only. Hence, he says, Gaal and his brethren, who were not Israelites, were only sent away by Abimelech — not punished.

the temple of Baal in Shechem, and given to Abimelech, and with this he raised a band of men, such as troublous times always produce, ready to do anything required of them. With these he at once began war on his brothers, whom he finally overcame and ruthlessly put to death—apparently by beheading—on "one stone."

One, however, Jotham—"Jehovah is perfect"—escaped the massacre, and made his way to Mount Gerizim, which overlooks the sweet valley of Shechem,[1] at the very time when the men of the city and neighbourhood had assembled below, round the oak of "the watch-post," or of "the monument"—perhaps the memorial erected by Joshua[2]—to hail Abimelech as king;[3] the first in the history of Israel. Suddenly, however, Jotham, who had inherited the sagacity and ready wit of his father and grandfather, presented himself high overhead on one of the rocky spurs that project from Gerizim, and from its inaccessible security broke forth to the astonished multitude in a striking address; the earliest recorded Parable; forcing them to hear his solemn warning against the course they were pursuing. The imagery he employed was taken from the scene around. In the fables of India and Greece, beasts and birds are supposed to speak or act, but in Palestine the vegetable world is introduced, and in no spot in the land was there such a luxuriance of verdure as at his feet. "The trees," said he, "once sought a king, and came in turn to the olive, the fig tree, and the vine, asking each successively to reign over them. They all, however, declined to exchange their honoured usefulness in bearing fruit, for barren glory. 'Should I,' said the

[1] It is 1,600 feet broad between Ebal and Gerizim. Rob. *Palest.*, vol. iii. p. 316.

[2] Josh. xxiv. 26. See Bertheau, *Richter*, p. 139.

[3] The men of Shechem are said to have joined with "all the house of Millo," apparently a "fortress" near Shechem.

olive, 'the chief of all the trees in the valley of Shechem, leave my fatness, which gods and men extol in me, to wave over the trees ?'[1] 'Should I forsake my sweetness,' said the fig tree, 'with its broad green shade, and my good fruit, to wave over the trees ?' 'Should I leave my wine, which cheereth gods and man,' said the trailing vine, 'and go to wave over the trees ?' But the worthless thorn-bush had no such scruples. It eagerly grasped at the dignity when offered it, and boastingly promised to take faithful subjects under its shadow ; as if, in its meanness, it could protect anything ; but threatened to burn up all who resisted it, even the mighty cedars of Lebanon. If," continued Jotham, "your choice of Abimelech, the meanest of my father's sons, for king, be what Gideon's memory deserves, for the victory that freed you from Midian—Abimelech, who has killed all my father's true-born sons but myself—may you find joy in each other ! But if it be not, a fire will come from the worthless thorn-bush you have this day raised over you, that will burn you up ; ay, and a fire will break out from you that will devour him ! " These words uttered, he disappeared, making his way to Beor, apparently in the far-off tribe of Benjamin.

The frightful policy by which Abimelech had sought to secure his position, by the murder of his brothers, formed an evil precedent in Israel. Long after, it was repeated by Jehu, in his extermination of Ahab's family,[2] and by Athaliah in the massacre of Ahaziah's children.[3] Similar barbarity seems, indeed, to have been familiar to the East in all ages. In Turkey it prevailed till a generation ago, and in Persia it is still the practice to blind the brothers of a Shah, and any other collateral heirs to the throne, at the com-

[1] Literal meaning. [2] 2 Kings x. 1-7. [3] 2 Kings xi. 1.

mencement of a new reign.[1] Such a beginning of Abimelech's royalty shewed his character, and he remained true to it throughout. Heartlessly selfish, unprincipled, and unscrupulous, it was not long before he roused his subjects to rebellion. Affecting the king, he had an army, a revenue, and the beginning of an administration, in the person of a viceroy, Zebul, whom he left in charge of Shechem, while he himself moved to Aruma, possibly el'Ormeh, six miles south-east of Shechem.[2] His tyranny, meanwhile, became so insupportable, that bands from Shechem waylaid and plundered all connected with him, whom they could catch, and even tried to entrap himself. Gaal, a Canaanite of Shechem, sent thither from Abimelech with armed men, apparently to put down the townsmen, presently fraternized with them. A merry-making at the vine harvest, held in the temple of Baal[3]—for the Canaanite worship had rooted itself thus early in Israel—brought matters to a head by a wild, traitorous speech of Gaal, in which he proposed to dethrone Abimelech, and, as one of the old race, himself to rule over his brethren. This treason Zebul instantly reported to his master, who shewed that he inherited the energy of his father, if not his moral worth. Gaal and his men were soon defeated and expelled from the town,[4] and a second fight, on the next day, overthrew the men of Shechem and left it in the cruel hands of Abimelech; who, after killing all he could find, threw down the houses, and sowed the ground

[1] Lady M'Neil, wife of the late ambassador in Persia, one day saw one of the princes, a boy of ten, with a handkerchief tied over his eyes, groping about the apartment. On asking what he was doing, the lad replied that he knew his eyes would be put out when the king, his father, died, and he was trying what it meant to be blind. His father had had the throne secured to him by his uncle, the former king, having exterminated all the "seed royal." In our own day King Thebau, in Burmah, has done the same thing to make his own throne safe.

[2] *Pal. Mem.*, ii. 387. [3] Judg. ix. 27. [4] Judg. ix. 41.

with salt, as if to curse it and make it barren henceforth. A remnant of the population had, however, fled to an inner chamber[1] in the temple of Baal, as a kind of stronghold, where they might hope to find a sanctuary. But Abimelech knew neither pity nor reverence. Marching with his men to the neighbouring hill, Zalmon—"the shady," apparently the southern peak of Gerizim—he set the example of cutting down a bough with his own hands, and all with him doing the same, the whole returned, and having piled the mass of fuel on the part of the temple where the people were shut in, burned alive about a thousand men and women.[2]

From Shechem he passed on to Thebez, the present Tubas, on the main road, about half way between Shechem and Bethshean, and tried the same plan with its inhabitants, who had fled to a strong tower in the city, after their first defeat. But the curse of Jotham was on his track. As he pressed close to the tower, to help in laying the fuel to burn it, a woman cast down on him an upper millstone, and fractured his skull, leaving him only life enough to ask his armour-bearer to run him through, to save him the shame of dying by a woman's hand.[3]

In the wild confusion of the times, Tola, a man of Issa-

[1] "An hold" = a sunken chamber.

[2] The "house of Millo," Judg. ix. 20, is understood by Bertheau to have been the name for the stronghold to which the inhabitants of Shechem fled (pp. 46-48). He thinks it was probably on Mount Gerizim. Graetz, on the contrary, considers Migdal Shechem (the tower of Shechem) was a town near Shechem. The "hold," he imagines, was a subterranean entrance, through which Abimelech, like Pelissier with the Arabs in our own day, killed those inside by the smoke.

[3] So King Pyrrhus was killed at Argos by a heavy tile thrown on his head by the mother of a woman whose son was in danger. Falling insensible from his horse, a Greek presently beheaded him. So, also, at Ceuta, is shown a stone with which a woman from a tower fractured the skull of the Portuguese commander of one of the sieges of the town. Urquhart's *Pillar of Hercules*, vol. i. p. 96.

char, perhaps a connection of Abimelech,[1] rose next, so far as we know, to the leadership; but nothing is told of his deeds, either in peace or war, except that he defended the northern tribes for twenty-three years from whatever dangers imperilled them. But while on the west of Jordan there was only a struggle for existence, the Manassites or Gileadites, on the east of the river, were enlarging their boundaries. They, also, had suffered from a branch of the Midianites who ranged over the desert slopes beyond the Hauran, but had burst on Gilead each spring, in desolating raids. From these insatiable foes Gideon had delivered them, and his victory had even extended the territory of the tribe. Meanwhile, at its head, stood the Gileadite, Jair—"God gives light"—a vigorous and successful leader, who kept such an approach to royal state that his thirty sons rode, like princes, on as many ass colts. Under him, new tracts were won, but what districts his conquests included is not told. They were, however, extensive enough to be known, from the encampments they afforded, as the tent villages of Jair,[2] each of them having one of his sons as its sheik. Beyond this nothing is told of his judgeship.

The Arab patriarchal government, or fragmentary isolation, had now lasted three hundred years, with ever-increasing disaster and anarchy as its result. Everywhere the national spirit was dying away, and the national religion decaying. The tribes were, in part, being lost in the heathen communities around. In the northern parts, the idols of Syria[3] and of Sidon replaced Jehovah, or were worshipped with Him. On the south-west those of the Philistines, and on the east, those of Moab and Ammon, had

[1] So Vulgate and Septuagint.

[2] Havoth Jair.

[3] The Hebrew words for "to divine," "to practise magic," "idol priests," and others, similar, are from the Syrian.

many followers.[1] But this apostasy only increased the general misery. East and west, at once, enemies harried them, for they had no strength, such as union gives, to hold their ground. The necessity for a monarchy was being brought home to all. While the Canaanites, under kings, had been steadily recovering national vigour, the Hebrews of the west had decayed, and those of the east were sinking into mere tent Arabs. The old Canaanite race of Ammon, crushed by their forefathers under Joshua, had risen once more to formidable power, and not only lorded it over Gad and Reuben, but, crossing the Jordan, invaded Judah, Benjamin, and Ephraim. Nor was the western side of the country less harassed, for there the Philistines, from the sea-coast, were plundering and spoiling far and near.

Deliverance was at last effected on the east of the Jordan by Jephthah, a Gileadite of the tribe of Manasseh, whose history and character are a vivid illustration of the dark unsettledness of the age. An illegitimate son, he had been driven from home by his brothers, and thenceforward betook himself to a wild, marauding life, on the borders of the tribe, at the head of such a band as evil times make possible. With them he had for years maintained a rough life, levying imposts on weak Ammonite towns, plundering caravans, and surprising villages, like the Arabs of those and later days. His fame, such as it was, had thus gradually spread over Gilead, and led at last, when the bondage to Ammon grew unendurable, to a deputation of elders being sent to him from a great "encampment" of the local tribes of Mizpeh, presumably the "watch-tower" raised by Jacob to mark the limits of his own district, and those of Laban's. High on a hill-top, it had become a local sanctuary and

[1] Judg. x. 6.

place of assembly, where, as in this case, the tents of the Hebrews, now virtually wandering Bedouins, were from time to time pitched when a council was to be held.

Religious disintegration had, indeed, gone so far that, besides the one authorized centre of worship at Shiloh, there were "The Mizpeh" and the altar of "Ea" among the eastern tribes; Ophrah, in Manasseh; Dan, in the north, and Gilgal, on the Jordan, with perhaps others.

The object of the deputation to Jephthah, was to implore him to return, to head a rising. But his wild, haughty soul had felt deeply his expulsion, and he would only consent to come back on the solemn oath, sworn on the altar of the local sanctuary at Mizpeh, that, if he freed the land, he—the banished one—should be its ruler for life. On this condition he put himself at the head of the tribe, and, after fruitless attempts at negotiation, burst on the enemy with such fury that he swept them before him over the uplands, from Minnith, near Heshbon, to the Meadow of the Vines, near Rabbah, and took from them twenty towns.[1]

The messages Jephthah had sent the Ammonites shew that the great deeds God had wrought for Israel in former days, had been handed down among the tents of the eastern tribes, and doubtless in the homes of the western, from generation to generation, as cherished traditions, which might yet bring back the nation to its ancient religious life. But contact with Moab and Ammon, and the worship of their sanguinary gods along with Jehovah, or in His stead, had given Jephthah a creed, in which zeal for God was darkly mingled with heathen ideas, borrowed from the rites of Chemosh; whom he seems to have recognized

[1] The phrase, "The Spirit of the Lord coming on Jephthah," is explained in the Talmud as, "Force of mind for great undertakings, and bodily strength," being granted him: a sense which has a deep and wise meaning.

as in some sense a true divinity.[1] In the excitement of anticipated battle, he had vowed to devote as a burnt offering to Jehovah "whomsoever"[2] should come out of the doors of his house, to meet him on his triumphal return, if victory were granted him. He had been accustomed to see human sacrifices offered to Chemosh, and knew how Balak long ago, in the extremity of his terror, had proposed to burn his eldest son.[3] Religious teaching of a purer kind he had had none, for Shiloh was far away in Ephraim, with which Gilead had, in these centuries, ceased to have any relations of friendliness. In his fierce, superstitious ignorance, he fancied, doubtless, that a slave, if the first to greet him as he came back, would be pointed out, by the fact of his doing so, as a specially acceptable sacrifice to Jehovah. But, as it happened, the news of his splendid deeds had outrun his approach to Mizpeh, and his only child—a young daughter—in her pride at her father's glory, had prepared a welcome for him, with the songs and dance with which heroes returning from war were met, and this, in her innocent joy, she led.[4] The bearing of father and daughter in so sad a calamity is equally striking. He is crushed by its greatness; but she rises with a noble grandeur of soul above her own sorrow, and, in her darkened conceptions of God, almost glories that He has granted the victory, even at the price of her agonizing death. Her grand submission shews how deeply rooted in that age was the idea that human sacrifice was due to the gods. She only asks that she be left for two months, to bewail her early unmarried end—so sad to Hebrew women—in the lonely depths of the mountains. Then comes the last awful scene: "He

[1] Judg. xi. 24.
[2] Literally so. Judg. xi. 31.
[3] Mic. vi. 7.
[4] Judith xv. 12, 13.

did with her according to his vow." No wonder that such a story should linger in the popular memory, and that, for generations after, the maidens of the land, in sympathy with such a victim of mistaken devotion—the first and last human sacrifice offered by well-meaning ignorance to Jehovah—should bewail her fate, and praise her grand resignation to it, on the hills which had witnessed her last days..

Only one other incident is told of Jephthah's rule, but it marks his character in its darkest shades. He had asked aid from the haughty tribe of Ephraim, west of the Jordan, in his great struggle with Ammon, and they had refused it. But, quarrelsome as they were proud, they no sooner heard of his victory, than they sent an insolent message to him, asking why he had not sought their help, and telling him that they would burn his house with fire for not having done so; backing their words by invading Gilead with a huge force. Statesman-like and gentle, Gideon had, in a similar case, soothed angry passions by soft words; but Jephthah returned defiance for defiance, and marched out to drive them back. It was hard, indeed, for the wounded pride of Gilead to stand the taunt, that they had fled from the Ammonites into Ephraim and into Western Manasseh;[1] hard because it was probably true; but an evil like civil war was worth avoiding by at least an attempt at the restoration of friendship. In the battle that followed, Ephraim, with all its boasting, was defeated, and then came a dire crime. Hurrying his men to the fords of the Jordan, Jephthah ordered them to kill every fugitive Ephraimite seeking to cross. To pronounce a given test-word, Shibboleth, as Sibboleth, was enough. Whoever did so was remorselessly killed as belonging to Ephraim. How savage and revenge-

[1] Judg. xii. 4.

ful the soul, that in such a quarrel carried out its hatred by slaughtering, as we are told he did, by this test, forty-two thousand of his brethren! Other judges have been called Shofetim—the name for the staid and dignified Phœnician magistrates; the manners of the Ephraimites perhaps shew us why Jephthah was only called Katzia, a leader.

The low ebb to which Israel had sunk in her eastern tribes had its counterpart in the south-west. A new enemy, destined to give huge trouble in the future, was now rising into strength. The Philistines, though mentioned in the distant times of Abraham, and originally employed by the Egyptian kings, as mercenaries, to garrison the five towns of the extreme south of Palestine, had already formed them into a seemingly independent confederacy in the days of Joshua, ruling from "the river of Egypt" to "Ekron."[1] They did not rise to formidable strength, however, as an aggressive power, till the latter part of the age of the Judges. Their name, from which that of "Palestine" is derived, means "the strangers" or immigrants;[2] but, as we have seen, they were really Phœnicians long settled in the Nile Delta.[3] There seem, indeed, to have been successive arrivals, the last in the time of Rameses III., who was reigning about the year B.C. 1200,[4] that is, about the time of Jephthah.[5] An attack on Egypt by Philistines, among other tribes, had been driven back by that prince, but many of the invaders, instead of returning to their own countries, had preferred to enter the service of their conqueror, as mercenaries; the

[1] Josh. xiii. 3; xv. 4, 47.

[2] It is literally Plischti, which Maspero notes as recalling Pelasgi.

[3] Vol. i. p. 308.

[4] Brugsch, vol. ii. p. 9.

[5] Conder's *Handbook*, p. 19. Phœnicia was *Kefi* in Egyptian, and *Kefi-ur* (Caphtor), "Greater Phœnicia," was the name of the Delta, from the Phœnician settlements in it, from which Scripture tells us they came. Gen. x. 14. See also 1 Chron. i. 12; Amos ix. 7.

Philistine part of them obtaining permission to settle among their brethren of earlier immigrations, in the south-west of Palestine ; to guard Egypt from the north.[1]

The territory thus reinforced by such a military colony, commanded the passes to the mountain home of Israel. Gaza, Askelon, Ashdod, Ekron, and Gath, its five cities, had long been famous, but now became dangerously strong. Thothmes III., Seti I., and Rameses II., as has been noticed, had kept garrisons of Philistine mercenaries at Gaza,[2] and the last of these monarchs had stormed and taken Askelon, after a rebellion, about the same time as Deborah overthrew Sisera on Esdraelon.[3] The original population—the Avites[4]—had long been degraded to the service of these fierce masters, who, however, had adopted their language and their religion. In Joshua's day the cities of the Philistine plain are not included in the lists of those held by Judah, though their district had been assigned to that tribe.[5] The fear of rousing Egypt, and the strength of the Philistines, had, in fact, kept Israel from attempting their conquest, and hence the Anakim,[6] chased from Hebron, and the Amorites, dispossessed of their mountains, found a safe refuge behind the walls of their cities, which became gradually the centres of small principalities, governed by a military chief bearing the title of Seren, or sometimes, as at Gath, of king. These five dignitaries acted together, as heads of a confederation ; offered in common the public sacrifices, and made war in concert, at the head of their respective contingents ; their principal force consist-

[1] Maspero, p. 302.
[2] *Papyrus Anastasi*, III., pl. v. 6.
[3] Conder, p. 19.
[4] Avites—dwellers in the Ivvah or lowlands. Lengerke.
[5] Josh. xii. 12.
[6] Anakim = the long-necked—that is, "gigantic." Lengerke, p. 183. Riehm, art. "Enek."

ing of chariots, and archers, whose skill was proverbial in Israel.[1]

Such was the nation with which Israel was to wage war with a splendid tenacity for the next hundred years. About this time, in the Providence of God, a child was born, who was destined to rouse his countrymen to their long struggle for independence, if not during his life, at least by his ever growing fame after his death. The birth of Samson is the opening of a new period, which culminated in the reign of David, but, as such, it belongs to the glorious age it introduced, rather than to the gloomy past which it in a manner closed.

[1] See on this whole subject, Starke, *Gaza und die Philistäische Küste.* Hitzig, *Die Philistäer*, Jena, 1852.

INDEX.

Aaron, rod of, swallows up the other rods, 157 ; death of sons of, 343 ; rod of, buds, 381 ; death of, 390–4.
Abigail, sister of David, marriage of, with an Ishmaelite, 494 *n.*
Abimelech, 568 ; hailed king, 569 ; reign of, 571 ; horrible cruelty of, at Shechem, 572 ; death of, 572.
Acacia trees and wood, 325.
Achan, destruction of, 459.
Achor, the valley of, 459.
Ai, taking of, 458–61.
Altar, brazen, 334–5.
Altars, private, 519.
Amalekites, 290–1.
Amenhotep IV., 66.
Ammonites, battle with the, 400 ; traces of in Benjamin, 535.
Ancient custom of "devoting" armies, etc., to destruction, 446–447.
Animals and vegetables, worship of, 79 ; sacred, capital punishment for killing, 81.
Apis, temple of, 16 ; duration of worship of, 19 ; sepulchres of god, 18 ; description of the ox, 82.
Apopi, Joseph's king, description of, 42, 43.
Arabs, mode of baking among the, 190, 191 *n.* ; worship of, 273 ; modern customs of, 276–7 ; derivation of word, 368 ; chiefs, names of, 558.
Argob, or stony land, 405.
Arks, sacred, 329–31.
Asher, tribe of, purveyors to Phœnician cities, 486.
Ashes, scattering of, by priests, to avert evil, 172.
Ashtoreth, altars to, 516, 522.
Asses and mules, 434.

Baal, worship of, 417.
Baal-berith, 568.
Babylonian deities, names of, 518–19.
Balaam, 409–10 ; ass of, 413 ; Christ's advent predicted by, 415 ; high places to which he was brought, 415–16.
Barak, 540–1.
Bashan, and Og, its king, 401–2.
Bathing, amongst Egyptians a religious requirement, 120.
Beetle, sacred, of Egyptians, 169.
Benjamin, military character of tribe of, 489 ; position of tribe of, 489.
Benjamites, almost exterminated, 527.
Beth-bara, ford of, 565.
Bethel, taking of, 462.
Boils, plague of, 172.
Bottles, wine, in the East, 471.
Brickmaking in Egypt, papyrus describing, 110–13 ; hardships of the Hebrews in, 110, 156–7.
Bricks, inscription on, 110 ; sun-dried, 113.
Bush, the burning, 147.

Caleb takes Hebron, 491.
Calf, Golden, 22, 287, 313, 319.

Canaan, difficulties in conquering, 433 ; chariots of war in, 537.
Canaanites, flight of, before Joshua, 462-3 ; fugitives in Nubia, traces of, 463 ; chariots and armour of, 483, 485 ; religion of the, 513 ; pilgrimages of the, 518.
Canaanitish emigrants to Africa, 529.
Captives in Egypt, treatment of, 133.
Caravan journey, Palmer's description of, 241–2.
Caravans, league of Baal-berith formed for protection of, 568.
Cattle, death of, by murrain, 171.
Cave-men, 87.
Census taken, 343, 422.
Chairs, Egyptian, 125–6.
Charcoal, Arab trade in, 250.
Chariots, 433.
Charms, 60, 149 *n.*
Children, food of Egyptian, 13.
Church and State, 295.
Christians, double-minded, 411.
Circulating medium in Egypt, 102–103.
Circumcision, 116, 442–3 ; Joshua's stone knives for, 503.
Copper, early use of, 261–4.
Covenant, Book of the, 308 ; renewal of the, 323.
Covenants, Arab, 310.
Crimesus, battle of, parallel to Deborah's victory, 551.
Crocodile, worship of, 37.
Cromlechs, on the hills near the River Jabbok, 399.

Dan, position of tribe of, 496–7.
Dances, sacred, 217, 315, 316.
Darkness, plague of, 177 ; "that may be felt," explanation of, 177 *n.*
Dead, Book of the, 131 ; honours paid to the, in Egypt, 202.
Dead Sea, 438, 452.
Deborah, 511, 539 ; village of, 542 *n.* ; song of, 550–5 ; victory of, results of, on Israelites' future, 550.
Delta, fertility of, 6, 7.
Desert of the Wanderings, 369.
Dew in the East, 562.
Disinfectants used in Egyptian palace, 125.
Dynasty, Eighteenth, expiration of, 76,

Eastern thrones, barbarous means of securing, 570–1.
Ebal and Gerizim, law read at, 450, 467 ; description of, 464.
Edom, refusal to let Israelites pass through, 389.
Edrei, 403–4.
Eglon, death of, 533.
Egypt, meaning of word, 1 ; deification of sovereigns of, 5, 6, 31, 62, 74–5 ; monuments of ancient, 6, 7 ; tombs of, Job's description of, 8 ; dykes of, 8, 9 ; day in, 10 ; night in, 10 ; huts, Hebrew, in, 11 ; gnats, clouds of, in, 13 ; plants, luxuriant growth of, in, 14 ; vegetables of, 14 ; peasants' food in, 14 ; university-city of, 14 ; temples of, 22, 23 ; court ceremonial of, 35 ; navigation of, 36, 38 ; pictures of every-day life and work in, 37 ; glory and prosperity of, 37, 38, 52 ; invasion of, by shepherds, 38, 39 ; vast intrenched camp in, under Hyksos, 39 ; naval officer of, interesting story of a, 46, 47 ; buildings of, length of time required in raising, 48 ; and Canaan, common origin of the peoples of, 49 ; painting of, emblematic, 50 ; religions of, 79 ; Clement of Alexandria's account of the gods of, 79, 80 ; Strabo's visit to sacred crocodile, 80 ; influence of religion in, on the Hebrews, 77, 78 ; triumphal processions in, 50 ; immoral influence of, on Hebrews, 84; immorality of, 84, 85; slaves, cruelty to, and lower classes of, 97–8 ; sacred procession in, Clement of Alexandria's de-

scription of, 130 ; invasion of, by Syrians, Greeks, etc., 154 ; Delta, the weak point of, 155 ; rods of office used in, 157 *n.* ; terrible heat of, 157 ; wonder-workers of, 157–8 ; waters of, turned into blood, 160–5 ; frog, emblem of the sun, 165 *n.* ; frog divine in, 165 ; first-born, death of the, in, 184–5 ; breaking up of the kingdom of, after Exodus, 213, 214.
Egyptian, words incorporated in the Hebrew, 89 ; libraries, inscriptions over, 132 ; spoils, taken in war, 154, 431–2 ; troops, ferocity of, 153 ; ceremonial cleanliness of, 166–8 ; trees, fondness of the, for, 174 *n.* ; pilgrimages, religious, of the, 176 *n.* ; armour, 218 *n.*, 335.
Eleazar, death and burial of, 526 ; spared, as well as Joshua and Caleb, to enter Canaan, 526.
Embalming, 202.
Endor, 543.
Ephraim, district held by tribe of, 485 ; tribe of, disliked by other tribes, and reasons for their dislike, 519.
Esdraelon, plain of, 454, 485–7, 543–4.
Etham, 195.
Exodus, description of the, 190–7 ; Egyptian account of the, 225–9.

Fish, abundance of, in Egypt, 5.
Flagellants, 316.
Flax, importance of crops of, in Egypt, 173 *n.*
Flies, fatal to horses, 167 ; plague of, 169 ; trouble caused at present day by, 170.
Fly-gods, 168.
Fresh canal, the, 33.
Frogs, plague of, 165.

Galilee, Sea of, 437.
Garments, Assyrian, 458–9 *n.*
Gaza, garrison at, 579.
Gennesareth, meaning of, 419.
Gibeon, cities confederated with, 469–71.
Gideon, 511, 515 ; rise of, 556 ; meaning of, 560 ; fleece of, 562 ; overthrows his father's altars, 561 ; stratagem of, 563 ; same stratagem amongst modern Arabs, 563 ; religion and superstition of, 567; sons of, slaughter of, by Abimelech, 568–9.
Gilead, 402, 420.
Gilgal, circle of, 441–2 ; assembly held at, 485 ; Tabernacle at, 499–500.
Goshen, monotonous aspect of, 9 ; fertility of, 3–5 ; name of, still remaining, 2, 3 ; position of, 1 ; present condition of, 3–5.
Grape-gathering, festival of, 524.

Hail, plague of, 173.
Hannibal, meaning of name, 516.
Harosheth, 545.
Hashop, reign of queen, 54, 55.
Hawk, the sacred, 28.
Hebrews, times of sojourn in Egypt, troubled, 45 ; occupations of, before the Exodus, 77 ; civilization acquired in Egypt by, 85, 114–116 ; military unions of, 88 ; writing, the art of, amongst, 89 ; organization of, in Egypt, 78, 88 ; Egyptian policy of repression towards the, 92 ; rations given to the, 106 ; fear of Egyptians at the increase of, 114 ; traditions respecting the, 116 ; meaning of name, 148 ; desire of, to sacrifice in the wilderness, 152 ; forced labour of the, 154 ; in Egypt, religious training of, by Aaron, 179 ; borrow from Egyptians, 180, 181 ; ecclesiastical year begins from day of Exodus of the, 181 ; probable number of the, at Exodus, 189, 240–1 *n.* ; permission given for the departure of the, 186 ; camping-place of, on east of Red Sea, 230 ; length of captivity of, in Egypt, 215 ; water supply,

difficulties of obtaining sufficient, 241 *n.*; quails sent for food, 243–4 ; idols, hold that they had on the minds of the, 346, 387 ; immortality, ideas of among, 346–7 ; government of the, 349 ; camp of the, 349–351 ; march of, very toilsome, 353 ; fire sent by God to punish, 354 ; quails sent for punishment to the, 355 ; encampments, remains of, 355–6 ; names, Scripture, for individuals, 365 ; condemned to wander for forty years, 367 ; defeated at Hormah, 367 ; clothing and food of, during wanderings, 374 ; poetry, 398 ; aversion to government by an individual, 510 ; Canaanites had same language as, 515 ; Canaanite intermarriages amongst the, 517 ; slaves to Sidonians, 530; condition of, under later Judges, 536 ; words for idolatry taken from Syrians by, 573.
Heliopolis, temple of, 23.
Hero-worship incompatible with honour to God, 117.
High-priesthood, hereditary, 527.
Hittites, high civilization of, 53 ; great wars of the, 93.
Hor, Mount, 391.
Horeb, meaning of word, 147.
Hornets, 406.
Horse, first mention of the, in Egypt, 52 *n.*
Hyksos, residence in Zoan of, 30 ; resemblance of present population to, 33 ; gradual civilization of, 41 ; etymology of word, 39 ; personal appearance of the, 40 ; driven out of Egypt, 44 ; belief by some that they were Israelites, 48 *n.*

Images put down by Josiah, 520 *n.*
Immortality of soul, in Egypt, thought to depend on embalmment, 133.
Incantations and spells, 408–9.
Incense, 333–4.
Isis, temple of, 16.
Israel, chiefs of tribes of, 87 ; subdued by Jabin's successor, 537 ; Kenites betray, 545 ; apostasy of, 574–5 ; worship, authorized centres of, in, 575.
Israelites, conquests of, moral aspect of the, 452 ; hanging amongst the, 461, 477 ; their conquests ascribed to God, 499 ; simplicity of domestic life amongst, 506 ; justice dispensed at the gate by the, 507 ; elders amongst, 508 ; military organization unknown to, 508 ; idolatry of, various causes of, 512–13 ; influence of heathenism on, 521–2 ; troubles after Joshua's death, 524–5.

Jacob, dying words of, 86 ; well of, 464 ; house of, 490.
Jael, 475–6.
Jasher, Book of, 474.
Jebel Musa, Mount of Moses, 138.
Jebusites, meaning of, 517 *n.*
Jehovah, worship of, 148.
Jehovah Shalom, meaning of, 561.
Jephthah, 511, 575 ; the vow of, 575 ; daughter of, 576 ; quarrel of, with Ephraim, 577.
Jericho, 441–5 ; rebuilding of, 451.
Jerusalem, burning of, 490.
Jethro, etymology of word, 135.
Jews, salutations of the, 353 *n.*
Joash, sons of, 560.
Jordan, River, 435–8 ; crossing of, 440–1.
Joseph, wife of, 17 ; sale of, 35 ; Egyptian dynasties before, 35 ; vizier to Shepherd King, 42 ; high position of, 74 ; date of his entrance into Egypt, 94 ; affection of the Egyptians for, 116 ; burial of mummy of, in Palestine, 464, 485 ; House of, 485–90
Joshua, character of, 434–435; slaughter of Canaanites by, 447–8 ; victory over the five kings,

472–7 ; sun commanded to stand still by, 475 ; age of, 483 ; Jabin and Canaanitish confederation overwhelmed, 482–4 ; retirement of from office of general, 500 ; death of, 501 ; supposed tomb of, 501–2, 503–4 ; renewal of national covenant by, 510 ; and Saul, length of time between, 524.
Jotham, 569.
Judah, tribe of, position of the, 490.
Judah and Israel, kings of, mostly apostates, 512.
Judgment, future, in Ancient Egypt, 131.

Kadesh Barnea, 363.
Kadesh Naphtali, 540.
Karnak, temple of, 56–59.
Kenites, descendants of Abraham, 134.
Kiriath-jearim, 470.
Kishon, the river, 543–4.
Korah, children of, 459 ; Dathan and Abiram, 379–80.

Labyrinth, palace of the, 37.
Lakes, traces of ancient, 247.
Lamp, sacred, 333.
Law, giving of, 301–2 ; the, transcribed for wider use, 522–3.
Lebanon, meaning of, 453.
Leprosy, 226–9 ; Miriam afflicted with, 357.
Levi, the tribe of, 86, 90, 116, 117, 142–3, 320 ; legend respecting priesthood of, 338 ; means of support of tribe of, 498.
Levites, poverty of, 519–20.
Lice, plague of, 166–8.
Locusts, plague of, 174–5.

Machpelah, cave of, 492.
Magicians, Eastern, 157 ; wine turned different colours by, 164–5.
Manna, 243, 246 ; and sweet syrup from trees, 245–6, 251–6.
Manuscript, ancient Samaritan, 522–3.
Marah, waters of, 232, 234–5.
Marriage, of brothers with sisters, 54 ; Hebrew women's feelings about, 576.
Massacre of all male Hebrew infants, 118.
Measures, Jewish, names of, 89.
Medicine, knowledge of, in Ancient Egypt, 131.
Megiddo, 544–5.
Memnon, statue of, 65.
Memorials of campaigns of Rameses, 93.
Memphis, seat of first Egyptian monarchy, 8; meaning of, 14 *n.*; secure site of, 14 ; White Castle of, 15 ; Persian possession of, 15 ; temples and priests of, 16 ; remains of, 17 ; founding of, 35.
Menes, first Egyptian king, 35 ; civilization of Egypt under, 35, 36.
Menzeleh, Lake, 32.
Merom, battle of, 489.
Meroz, curse of the people of, 542, 551, 554.
Messengers, Eastern, speed of, 191.
Micah, story of, 519–21.
Midianites, battle with the, 418 ; invasion of, 556 ; ear-rings and nose-jewels of, 567 *n.*
Milk, curdled, a soporific, 549.
Millo, the house of, 572 *n.*
Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 433.
Mines, gold and minerals, 38, 52.
Miriam, quick wit of, 123.
Mirrors, Egyptian copper, 335.
Mishor, 419.
Mizpeh, sanctuary at, 575.
Moab, uplands of, 397.
Moabite stone, 401 *n.*
Mœris Lake, a vast reservoir, 37.
Moloch, worship of, 311, 316, 318.
Monuments, antiquity of, 8 ; many in Palestine, 442.
Moses, miracles of, 33 ; parents of, 117 ; mother of, her high character, 117 ; birth, date of, 117 ; ark of, similar story of

king of Agada, 118; birthplace, 119; name, etc., of the princess who saved, 120, 121; etymology of word, 122; childhood, 123; Josephus' account of, 129; beauty, 129; Jewish traditions respecting, 129; education of, 129, 130; flight of, to Midian, 133–4; name of son, 135; influence of Sinai life on, 135–6; slays Egyptian, 133, 145; circumcision of sons of, 150 *n.*; leprosy of, 150 *n.*; meeting of Aaron and, 151; rod of, changed to serpent, 150, 157; and Pharaoh, relative ages of, 156; life of, threatened, 177; mighty nature of the undertaking of, 192; song of, 217–19; reason for going through Sinai desert, 267–8; rock struck by, 277–88; and Jethro, meeting of, 293–4; appoints judges, 295; pleads with Jehovah, 319, 323; horns of, explained, 323 *n.*; strikes the rock, 383; writes the ninetieth Psalm, 383–5; poems of, 422; death of, 422–6; character of, 425–8; legends respecting death of, 426–8; his advice as to kings, 505; grandson of, poverty of, 520.
Mountains, holy, 140, 141.
Mount of God, 287.
Mummies, remains of, 18, 19, 28, 214.
Mummy of Rameses discovered in 1879, 91.
Musical instruments of the Hebrews, 221.

Nain, 543.
Names, and their meanings, numerous for towns, 33; secret, of gods, 377, 408–9; Hebrew and Canaanite, 516.
Naphtali, and its proud symbol, 487.
Navy, Solomon's port for his, 395.
Nebo, Mount, 423–4.
Necropolis of Memphis, 17, 18, 19.
Negeb, or "South Country," 362, 369–75.
Nile, branches of, 7; breadth of the, 6; canals of the, 11; civilization in the valley of, 9; height of inundation of, 37 *n.*; Herodotus' remark about the, 6; old mouths of the, 7; inundations of, 10, 11, 15; Napoleon's remark concerning the, 4; hymn to, 160; natural discolouration of, 162–3; registration of the increase of waters of, during the inundation, 164; religious homage paid to the, 164.
Nilometer, 16.
Numbers, supposed magic power of some, 412.

Oasis, eastern, what it is, 362.
Obelisks, emblematic, 25.
On, or Heliopolis, etymology of, 22 *n.*; description of temple of, 25, 26; Hebrew residents in, 21; observatory of, 23; pantheon of, 22; temple services at, 22; remains of, 29; founding of, 37.
Onions, medicine for fever, 14 *n.*
Oppression, the Hebrew, 90–92, 96.
Oracles, 492, 518–20.
Oreb and Zeeb, death of, 566.
Osiris, fables respecting, 29.
Othniel, the "Lion of God," marriage of, to Caleb's daughter, 492; relations of, to Mesopotamia, 531–3.

Paintings, fresco, preservation of, in the East, 468.
Palestine, routes, various, and dangers of the same, from Egypt to, 222–6; eastern, 418–22; Strasburg, analogous name in, 413; lions and other wild animals in, 372, 430; wealth of kings of, 432; barley and flax harvest, 438–40; linen making in, 440 *n.*; Maritime Plain, 455; mountains, height of, 452–3, 465; corn valley of, 464; date of conquest of, 467 *n.*; division of,

among twelve tribes, 484–6 ; grapes of, 492 ; trees and water supply of, 486–7 ; religious development favoured by position of, 511–12 ; prevailing idolatry in, 513 ; caravan roads through, 537 ; passes of, 530 ; fortresses of, 538, 545, 569 ; palms in, 539 ; plains, insecurity of the, 557–8.
Palm tree, 539.
Papyrus plants, 120.
Parable, Jotham's, the earliest recorded, 569.
Passover, Mills's description of modern observance of, 184–6 *n.* ; institution of the, 181–3 ; symbolical, 183 ; second celebration of, 343.
Passports required, 100.
Patriotism, difficulty for it to exist, 509.
Peasantry, condition of, 11, 12 ; 99, 100.
Pelusium, *fête* at, in time of Moses, 126.
Pentateuch, Samaritan, 522.
Petra, view from, 390.
Pharaoh, coronation of the, 74–5 ; despotism of the, 83, 156 ; difficulty of the succession to the throne of the, 66–71 ; meaning of, 12 *n.*, 35 ; nurse of, position of, at court of the, 73 ; despotism of the, 83, 97 ; the, of the Exodus, 90–4 ; deification of the, 156 *n.* ; ode addressed by court laureate to, 156 ; numerous family of, 152–3 ; hardening of his heart, 177 *n.* ; chariots of, 200 ; delay in pursuing Hebrews, reasons for, 202 ; destruction of, with host, in Red Sea, 210–11 ; Hebrews, pursuit of the, 199 ; Menephtah, death of son of, 187 ; Arab traditions respecting punishment of, 239 ; represented as bringing water out of the rock, 267–8.
Philistia and Sharon, plains of, 454.
Philistines, cities of the, 579 ; rise of the, 578 ; and Egyptians, relations between, 578–9 ; archers and chariots of the, 579–80 ; civilization of the, 579–80.
Phinehas, and Eleazar, tombs of, 526–7 ; meaning of name, 528 ; character and work of, 527–8 ; mother of, 528.
Phœnician colonies, 529.
Phœnicians, strength of the, 529.
Phœnix, worship of, 22, 82.
Pilgrimages, religious, among Egyptians, 152 *n.*
Pisgah, 423–4.
Pithom, or Succoth, 108–9, 194–5.
Plague, first, 160 ; second, 165 ; third, 166 ; fourth, 168 ; fifth, 170 ; sixth, 172 ; seventh, 173 ; eighth, 174 ; ninth, 176. God sends the, 320, 355, 380.
Plagues of Egypt, a triumph over the local gods, 173, 179.
Plato, his residence in On, 29.
Priestesses of Amon, 128.
Priesthood, rise of Aaronic, 336, 342–3 ; first-born sons originally constituted the, 378–9.
Priests, feet of, bare during worship, 340 ; limited power of Hebrew, 348.
Prisoners of war, Assyrian and general, ancient treatment of, 449–51, 484.
Prophets, 348, 357–8 ; and priests, dress of Egyptian, 128 ; meaning of, 145, 220 *n.*
Pyramid, Cheops builder of Great, 36 ; building of Great, 72 ; Khu-n-Aten's, destruction of, by priests, 75–6.
Pyramid, translation of word, 9.
Pyramids, building of, 8.
Pyrrhus, king, killed in the same way as Abimelech, 572 *n.*

Qadees, wady, 363–4 ; Moses' headquarters at, for forty years, 364.
Quails, flights of, 244–5.
Quarries, Egyptian, 8, 9, 13, 48, 98.

Rahab and the spies, 439.
Rameses II., temple of, 31; city built by, 107; description of palace of, where Moses was brought up, 123; the persecutor of the Hebrews, 90, 91; a great builder, 93, 96, 97.
Ra-Sekenen, leader of the great war of independence, 43, 44; mummy of, unrolled in 1886, 44.
Red colour, symbol of evil in Egypt, 161–2, 172.
Red Sea, derivation of name, 212 *n.*, 222, 240; Hebrews pass the, 203–5; passage of, description in Psalms, 210; locality of crossing-place, 203; traditions of crossing of, 221.
Refuge, cities of, 498.
Religion, an index to a nation's health and vigour, 531.
Respect, habits of, Eastern and Western, 148 *n.*
Resurrection, belief of the ancient Egyptians in, 83.

Sabbath, observation of, in wilderness, 253 *n.*
Sacks, Oriental travelling, 471.
Sacrifices, human, 22, 411.
Salt found in great quantity on land near Bitter Lakes, 206–8.
Samuel, reformation under, 515.
Samson, limited authority of, 511.
Sanctuary, 334–5.
Sand whirlwinds, darkness produced by, 177.
Sarcophagi, 406.
Saul, more Judge than king, 510; children of, called after idols, 522.
Seasons, the three Egyptian, 9.
Seirath, meaning of, 534 *n.*
Sentinels, unknown amongst Arabs, 564.
Serapeion, 16, 17.
Serpent, guardian genius of Cairo, 159 *n.*; worship, 159; the brazen, 395.
Serpents, amazing power of jugglers over, 159; flying, 395–6.
Seven, the number, **446** ***n.***
Seventy, council of, **349, 357.**
Shamgar, 535.
Sheba, parallel visit to that of the Queen of, 72.
Shechem, capital of Palestine, 485; temple to Baal at, 568; valley of, 569.
Sheiks, dress of, 559.
Shephelah, the, 455–6.
"Shepherd," meaning of, **1** ***n.***
Shibboleth, 577.
Shiloh, religious metropolis of Palestine, 500; weakness of priests' teaching at, 523–4.
Shur, wilderness of, 232.
Sidon, wealth of, 530.
Simeon, tribe of, 491, 496.
Sin, wilderness of, 241, 359, 361; deity of, 296 *n.*
Sinai, forests of, 136; peninsula, description of, 135; flora and fauna of, 136, 137; mineral springs in, 239; mines, 240, 250, 259; physical appearance of, 239, 240, 258, 279, 358–9; thirst and terrible heat described by Burton, 233; trees at, diminution of rain-fall by destruction of, 247; population of, 249, 250; mines, account of terrible sufferings in, 262; inscriptions, 269–75; date of inscriptions, 260; hieroglyphic inscriptions at ancient mines, 264–5; Law, mountain of the, 281–7, 296–7.
Sineha, flight of, from Egypt, 133.
Sirbonis, quicksands and bogs of, 223.
Sisera, 541; meaning of name, 545; death of, 549–50; the mother of, 554.
Slave-hunts in Egypt, 97.
Slaves, Egyptian, 7 *n.*, 96, **97**; fugitive, in ancient Egypt, 114–115.
Slingers, dexterity of, 541.
Soul, immortality of the, Egyptian doctrine of the, 83.
Sounds, distant, distinctness of, in the East, 468.

Sphinx, the Great, 61.
Spies, sending forth of the, 364.
"Spirit of the Lord," explained, 575 *n.*
"Spring of trembling," 562.
Standards, ancient, 350 *n.*
Stars fighting against Sisera, meaning of, 554 *n.*
Stephen of Byzance, 121.
Stoning to death, 376–8.
Store cities, 106.
St. Paul, route to Cæsarea, 472–3.
Strabo, visit of, to Heliopolis, 29.
Strikes of labourers, 104–5.
Suez Canal, 204–7.
Sun, Spring of the, 21.
Sunset, description of, 10.
Sursuks, Syrian bankers, 544.

Tabernacle, badger skins in the, 137, 327, 321–4 ; furniture of, 331 ; veil of the, 325–6 ; wine prohibited priests before entering the, 343.
Tablets, clay, recently discovered, 66 ; some written by Tushratta, 67 ; some by various kings, 69, 70.
Tabor, Mount, description of, 542 ; tribes which took part in battle of, 542.
Taskmasters, 12, 13, 36, 99, 106, 112, 133, 143.
Tent-life, effect of, on Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, 419–21.
Tents, rapidity with which Orientals strike their, 236 ; Arab, 548.
Thebes, Ebers' description of crowd in, 12, 13 ; remains of, 17.
Theocracy, Josephus invents the word, 347.
Thothmes III., the Egyptian Alexander the Great, 56.
Thothmes IV., dream of, 62, 63.
Tola, 572–3.
Tombs, illumination of, 502.
Torches, modern Egyptian, 563.
Torrents, 248–9.
Travelling among Orientals, 257–8.
Trees, large size of, 16.
Tribes, number of the Hebrew, 85–87 ; relative positions of the ten, 85–6 ; simplicity of organization of the twelve, 505–6 ; commerce almost entirely unknown amongst, 506–7.
Troy and Carthage, curses on, 451 *n.*
Trumpets, 446 ; of war, 534–5.
Turquoise mines, 8, 36, 259.

Universities of Egypt, 23.
Unleavened bread, feast of, 184.
Urim and Thummim, 340–2 ; not mentioned after David's time, 342.

Venus, the Assyrian, 118 *n.*
Venus and Astarte worshipped, 514.
Victory, songs of, 60.

Walls, Egyptian fortified, 1, 2, 3.
War, ferocious cruelty in the usages of, 491, 558, 577–8.
Water, plants used for sweetening, 234–5.
Water-carrier, 118.
Weapon, ox-goad used as, 535–6.
Wheat, threshing, 560.
Women, apartments of, in tents, etc., 548.
Workman, wretched condition of the, in Egypt, 101–5.

Year, fixed length of, 23.

Zeba and Zalmunna, 558 ; capture of, 565.
Zebulon, position of, 488.
Zipporah, meaning of, 135.
Zoan, Egyptian scribe's description of, 4 ; a Phœnician colony, 29 ; date of, 29 ; ruins of, 30 ; Tanis, capital of Lower Egypt in Joseph's day, 7 ; description of, 155 ; meeting of Pharaoh and Moses at, 153.

TEXTS ILLUSTRATED.

GENESIS. PAGE

x. 14.....578
xiii. 10..... 4
xiv. 7.....291, 367
xv. 13.....215
16.....216
xvii. 7.....443
10–14.....443
xx. 1 362
xxii. 3, 5.....373
xxiii. 3 507
xxiv. 10, 61–64....373
xxv. 7.....215
16..... 87
xxvi. 5.....299
12.....374
xxviii. 18.....309
xxxi. 45.....309
xxxii. 29.....376
xxxv. 28.....215
xxxvi. 10, 11..... 87
29, 30..... 87
15, 42.....531
xxxvii. 7.....374
xxxviii. 18..... 85
xli. 18..... 89
xlii. 7–12..... 44
xlvii. 6, 11..... 3
xlix. 3.....379
4.....420
6..... 86
15, 16.....489
20.....487
27.....489
l. 3.....202

EXODUS.

i. 10.....115
14.....418

PAGE

ii. 1.....117
23.....142
iii. 1.....297, 298
8.....453
13..... 84
22.....180
iv. 18.....353
22.....179
24-27.....150
27.....140
29.....144
31 152
v. 1.....217
1, 3, 17.....182
6, 14, 19.....144
9.....144
15.....157
vi. 18.....378
20.....117
24.....380
vii. 7.....119
11.....157
15.....164
16.....182
18.....165
viii. 1, 20, 25.....182
9.....166
13, 17.....167
24.....170
ix. 1, 13.....182
6.....171
31, 32.....173
34.....177
x. 9–11, 24.....
176, 182, 356
xi. 1.....179
2.....180
5.....171

PAGE

xii. 6.....185
11.....186
12.....183
14.....356
23.....183
25.....443
30.....183
34.....184
35.....181
37.....189, 255
38.....247
40, 41.....215
xiii. 4.....182
5–10.....443
13.....312
17.....198
18.....191, 351
20.....109
21.....210
xiv. 2.....199
3, 5.....200
11, 26.....203
12.....196
19, 20.....211
24.....212
30, 31.....212
xv. 14–16.....407
20 316
18.....512
22.....232
27.....247
xvi. 1.....297
3.....243, 418
13.....243
xvii. 3.....247
4.....288
6, 7.....277
16.....291

PAGE

xviii. 3, 4.....294
7.....294
11.....294
12.....294
16.....294
19.....512
xix. 1.....296
7, 8.....301
10.....440
22.....336
xx. 18.....284
24, 26.....309
xxii. 29.....310, 379
xxiii. 21.....377
30.....529
xxiv. 5.....336
9, 14.....349
28.....318
xxv. 22.....331
29.....333
xxvii. 16.....328
xxviii. 30.....341
40–42.....339
xxx. 1–6.....333
xxxi. 14, 15.....378
xxxii. 4.....314
6.....217, 374
20.....287
25.....320
28.....317
29.....310, 338
32.....320
xxxiii. 4–6.....322
7–11.....322
11.....322
14.....323
18.....323
xxxiv. 4–35.....324
20.....312
29.....323
xxxv. 2.....378
xxxviii. 8.....335
26.....189

LEVITICUS.

i. 4.....376
viii. 2, 26, 31.....374
13.....339
ix. 4.....374

PAGE

x. 1–3.....343
12.....374
xi. 44.....440
xvi. 22.....312
xvii. 7.....81, 313
xviii. 3.....84
9, 11.....121
23.....313
xix. 4.....346
28.....316
xxi. 5.....316
xxiii. 16.....181
41.....217
xxiv. 5.....374
5–10.....333
7.....332
10.....190, 375
11–16.....376
14.....376
xxvi. 1.....346

NUMBERS.

i. 2.....87
2, 3.....374
45, 46.....189, 255
51.....350
ii.....344
2.....350, 375
24, 26.....357
32.....255
iii. 6.....350
39.....320
43.....190
iv. 15.....331
48.....350
v. 24–27.....319
vii. 3.....286
13.....374
viii. 19.....343
ix. 5.....443
17.....352
x. 1.....349
33.....355
33–36.....352
xi.....355
4–34.....355
5.....354, 418
16.....144, 349

PAGE

xi. 26–30.....358
28.....434
31.....244
xiii. 17.....365
21.....365
22.....29
29.....288
xiv. 25.....367
34.....367
43, 45.....288
45.....367, 481
xv. 32–36.....378
xvi. 2.....378
13, 14.....380
xvii. 2–6.....343
8.....381
xviii.....381
xx. 1.....388
10–12.....382
xxi. 5.....395
6–8.....395
13–15.....397
14, 15.....401
15–26.....400
17, 18.....398
21–24.....388
27–30.....400
xxii. 1.....351
4.....413
39.....413
41.....412
xxiii. 1.....412
8.....232
19.....410
xxiv. 7.....291
xxv. 2.....417
xxvi. 11.....380, 459
51.....255, 374
62.....320
xxix. 13.....86
xxxi.....418
6.....527
16.....417
xxxii. 20.....440
37.....400
39.....421
xxxiii. 10.....240
12.....259
13.....275
xxxiv. 7, 8.....391

DEUTERONOMY. PAGE

i. 2.....297
28.....5
ii. 6.....247, 374
9.....398
13.....397
13, 14.....397
26.....398
iii. 1–17.....407
5.....406
10.....419
13–15.....421
25.....219
iv. 20.....172
43.....419
48.....400
vi. 11.....457
10, 11.....484
vii. 2.....446
viii. 4.....374
15.....368, 395
ix. 21.....284, 287
x. 3–5, 10.....324
6.....391
xi. 10.....418
xii. 2.....516
5.....463
8.....509
xiii. 15–17.....451
xvi. 18.....144
xvii. 7.....376
8–12.....508
14–20.....505
16.....434
xx. 9.....144
16.....446
xxi. 22, 23.....461
23.....477
xxiii. 7, 8.....375
18.....312
xxv. 18.....290
xxix. 4, 5.....374
9.....144
xxxi. 13, 14.....422
28.....144
xxxii. 8, 10.....387
10.....360
13.....499
17.....81
xxxiii. 3.....512
24.....487

PAGE

xxxiii. 29.....499
xxxiv. 7.....216

JOSHUA.

i. 10.....144
11.....375
ii. 9, 24.....462
11.....449
iii. 2.....144
iv. 12, 18.....440
v. 1.....462
10–12.....444
13–15.....435
vii. 14–17.....87
15.....459
viii. 33.....144
33, 34.....451
ix. 9, 24.....462
x. 2.....469
11–13.....476
20.....434
28–43.....480
36, 37.....491
40.....447
xi. 6.....484
6, 9.....434
xii. 12.....579
xiii. 3.....578
9–16.....419
22.....410
xiv. 6.....485
6–15.....491
7, 11.....485
10.....484
14.....531
xv. 4, 47.....578
13.....491
14.....492
18.....373
21–32.....371
29.....373
63.....491
xvii. 1.....421
2.....560
15–18.....434, 498
16–18.....486
xviii. 24.....535
xix. 3.....373
5.....432

PAGE

xix. 41.....496
47.....497
50.....500
xx. 8.....419
xxi. 42.....503
xxii. 10.....528
10–34.....528
xxiii. 1.....510
2.....144
xxiv. 1.....144
23.....85
26.....501, 569
30.....503

JUDGES.

i. 2.....516
3.....491, 509
7, 8.....490
9.....500, 503
13.....492
16.....134
17.....368, 494
18.....479
18, 19.....494
19–34.....498
27–36.....530
31, 32.....487
34, 35.....496
ii. 1.....523
2.....447
9.....503
iii. 6.....517
9.....492
13.....451, 533
16.....533
19, 26.....534
20.....533
23.....534
31.....536
iv. 11.....134, 545
12.....545
v. 2–9.....509
2–31.....552
4.....344
6.....537, 538
7.....536
8, 22.....434
8.....538, 540
10, 16.....536

PAGE

v. 14.....541, 542
15, 16 ....420, 542
17.....537
17, 18.....488
18.....542
23.....542
25.....549
27.....550
30.....537
vi. 2.....558
8.....559
11.....560
26.....567
27.....560
34.....561
vii. 10.....560
14.....560
25.....565
viii. 3.....566
5. ... .508
10.....557
15–17.....509
16.....566
18.....560, 566
19.....560
20.....560
22.....511
23.....512, 567
25, 26.....559
26.....559
31.....567
ix. 20.....572
27.....571
41.....571
x. 6.....574
16.. 530
xi. 9.....511
17, 18.....398
24.. 576
31.....576
xii. 4.....577
15.....291
xiii. 18.....376
25.....497
xv. 10–13.....511
xvii. 7–13.....336
xviii. 3.....336
12.....497
14–19.....521
16.....519

PAGE

xviii. 27–29.....497
30.....520
xix. 11.....490
xx. 2..... 89
15 489
16.....541
28.....490, 527
33.....539
xxi. 2.....316
19.....524

RUTH.

iv. 1.....507

1 SAMUEL.

i. 3.....500, 524
ii. 27, 28 116
vii. 15.....496
viii. 7.....512
x. 19 512
26 510
xi. 5..... ...510
xii. 11.....566
12.....512
xiii. 18 473
xv. 4 434
xvi. 12.....172
xvii. 17.....508
42.....172
47.....484
xviii. 6, 7.....316
xix. 3, 16.....520
xxv. 11..... 508
18, 20, 23...373
xxvii. 8.....288
xxx. 1–19 291
17.....373
xxxi. 7.....463

2 SAMUEL.

i. 18 474
vi. 5.....221
14.....336
16.....316
vii. 13 377
viii. 4.....434
18 336
x. 5.....451
6, 8.....365

PAGE

xiii. 13.....121
xvii. 25.....518
xx. 26 336
xxii. 11.....331

1 KINGS.

i. 50.....334
ii. 28 334
iv. 5.....336
vii. 46.....440
viii. 51.....172
62.....336
xi. 7.....516
xviii. 26, 28.....316
xx. 23, 25.....419

2 KINGS.

iii. 27.....411
x. 1–7 570
xi. 1.....570
xvii. 18.....516
xxiii. 24 520

1 CHRONICLES.

i. 12.....578
53.....531
ii. 17.....494, 518
iv. 13.....492
18.....335
22.....115
39–43.....496
v. 25.....420, 422
vi. 2.....117
vii. 21.....85, 115
24.....115
viii. 40.....541
ix. 39.....522
40.....522
xii. 2.....489, 541
8.....421
15.....439
xv. 5 380
xvi. 39–40 528
xx. 7.....484
xxiii. 4 144
xxv. 1–3.....220
xxvi. 29 144

2 Chronicles. PAGE
xvii. 17.....541
xx. 15.....484
19.....380
xxvi. 10.....419
xxxiii. 19.....516

Nehemiah.
ix. 25.....457, 484
xii. 27–29.....443

Esther.
[illegible]. 10, 14.....446
iv. 11.....302

Job.
iii. 14..... 9
xxviii. 2–4.....261

Psalms.
xviii. 7–11.....303
9–15.....302
10.....331
34.....499
xx. 7.....484
xxix. 3–9.....302
xlii. 1.....372
4.....217
xliv.....499
9.....346
liv. 7.....516
lix. 10.....516
lxviii. 1.....352
7, 8, 9....344
8.....303
14, 17.....484
25, 26.....221
lxxvii. 12–20.....220
17, 18.....210
lxxviii.....220
12, 43.....153
26.....244
43..... 33
51.....186
54.....219
60–68.....500
lxxx. 1.....331

PAGE
lxxxiii. 10...544, 547
11.....566
13, 14....565
xcii. 11.....516
xcvi. 5.....149
xcvii. 4, 5.....303
xcix. 1 331
cv.....220
cvi 220
28.....417
32, 33.....383
36.....519
cxiv.....220
cxv. 1 220
cl. 3–5.....221

Ecclesiastes.
xi. 1.....171

The Song of Solomon.
v. 10. 172
12 ... .372
vii. 4.....399

Isaiah.
ii. 5, 6.....490
viii. 17.....490
ix. 4, 5 566
x. 26.....565, 566
xiv. 1, etc.....490
29.....395
xv. 8 398
xvii. 9.....462
xix. 18..... 22
xxx. 6..... ...395
xxxiii. 28 443
xxxiv. 11–15, 21..313
xlviii. 10.....172
lviii. 14.....499
lxv. 9.....219

Jeremiah.
ii. 2 387
vii. 12... 500
22.....505
22, 23.....337
31.....516

PAGE
xi. 4.....172
13.....516
xvi. 6.....316
xxi. 13.....419
xxxii. 35.....516
xli. 5.....316
9... 457
xliii. 13..... 22
xlvii. 5 316
xlviii. 8, 21.....419
29, 41.....219
xlix. 19.....372, 438
l. 44.....372

Ezekiel.
ix. 3.....331
x. 4, 18.....331
xx. 7, 8.....84, 312
25.....337
26.....312
xxiii. 8 85
3–8 312
xxx. 17..... 22

Daniel.
iii. 13.....177

Hosea.
iii. 4.....520
iv. 13.....441
15.....500
ix. 10.....417
15.....441, 500
xii. 11.....441, 500

Joel.
ii. 6.....175
31 165

Amos.
iv. 4.....441, 500
v. 5.....441, 500
25.... 337
26.....312

Micah.
vi. 5.....411

PAGE

vi. 7.....576
ix. 7.....578

HABAKKUK.

iii. 19.....499

ZECHARIAH.

x. 2.....520
xi. 3.....438

MALACHI.

ii. 7.....524

TOBIT.

i. 5.....519

JUDITH.

xv. 12, 13.....576

1 MACCABEES. PAGE

vii. 39.....473

2 MACCABEES.

xiii. 2.....433

S. MATTHEW.

v. 38.....505
xix. 8.....505

S. JOHN.

iii. 14.....395

ACTS.

ii. 20.....165
vii. 6.....215
20.....129
30.....140
xxiii. 31.....473

ROMANS. PAGE

ii. 14, 15.....131

1 CORINTHIANS.

x. 4.....278

2 CORINTHIANS.

iii. 7.....324

GALATIANS.

iii. 17.....215

2 TIMOTHY.

iii. 8.....158

HEBREWS.

xi. 23.....129
32.....566

2 PETER.

ii. 15.....410